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DONJON OF DEMONS

DONJON OF DEMONS

A HERO'S TALE
FROM THE JESUIT RELATIONS

by

BENEDICT FITZPATRICK

Author of "Ireland and the Making of Britain," "Ireland and the
Foundations of Europe," etc.

LONDON

GEORGE ROUTLEDGE & SONS, LTD.

BROADWAY HOUSE: 68-74 CARTER LANE, E.C.

1931

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY HEADLEY BROTHERS,
18 DEVONSHIRE STREET, LONDON, E.C.2 ; AND ASHFORD, KENT.

"Considering from near as well as from afar this country of the Hurons and other neighbouring peoples it has always seemed to me one of the principal fortresses and, as it were, a donjon of the demons."—
Father Hierosme Lalemant, writing from Ossossané,
in the country of the Hurons, Jesuit Relations, 1639.

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DONJON OF DEMONS

CHAPTER I

THE THUNDER OF THE PALE FACE

THE routine of early morning had barely begun in the solitary group of block houses near Quebec, which represented the headquarters of the Jesuit missionaries of New France, when the thunder of cannon began to make the air tremble.

When the reverberations ceased the silence that had enveloped Cape Diamond and the wilderness of forest around appeared to have deepened, for the ear of man and beast everywhere had become at once preoccupied with the unwonted sound. A pennant of blue smoke waved above one of the Jesuit bungalows, two dwellings reinforced with bark and plastered with mud that, like the other "habitations" of Quebec, still showed the havoc perpetrated by the English four years before, but within the palisaded enclosure the sounds of activity came momentarily to an end. The tall birches and pines still rustled around the squared clearing, the drone and buzz of innumerable insects went on, but the awakening birds had ceased their chirping and wheeled in the air in affrighted flocks. The fear that drove them had also entered the refectory and cells of Notre Dame des Anges on the banks of the St. Charles.

There at the first sound of gun-fire, Father Le Jeune, Superior of the mission, Father de Noue and Brother Gilbert, who had all arrived from France in the preceding summer as vanguard of the missionary army that was to follow, came

together and looked uneasily at each other. The expression of their anxiety deepened, as with the second volume of gun-fire cries and yells came from the near-by forest and the scuffling of moccasined feet sounded within the enclosure.

“ Ouai ! ” “ Ouai ! ” “ Ouai ! ” “ Ouai ! ”

The cry of distress from maiden and squaw sounded now above the fierce jargon of guttural and unintelligible Algonquin voices that swept down the St. Charles in the direction of the St. Lawrence. It was apparent that the woods adjoining the mission had become alive with savages excited to fear and wonder by the thunder of the pale faces' artillery.

Then the Superior, a tall man, full of authority, with dark hair and eyes, and cassocked like his companions, with a cloth belt and immense beads at his waist, drew himself together, and seizing a black broad-brimmed hat that lay on a bark mat near by, placed it on the head of Father de Noue.

“ Father,” he said earnestly to the other religious, “ you must go at once to Quebec. Find out what has happened and take our good savage, Manitougache, with you. Brother Gilbert and I and our workmen will remain here awhile and make preparations for leaving if necessary. If those are English guns it is likely that trouble is ahead of us and of all the French in Quebec. Let us hope and pray that such is not the case, but if it is, then we can only say, the will of Heaven be done.”

A gigantic Montagnais native, naked except for a breech-cloth and a large robe of bearskin, attached by the dried intestine of a moose to his right shoulder, and holding a set of beads in one hand, at that moment entered the chapel and made a clumsy effort at kneeling, a posture that clearly

had a vague and unaccustomed meaning to him. Brushing his tremendous head of greasy black hair from over his face, he uttered some guttural exclamations in his native dialect of Algonquin, and gazed inquiringly at the two priests.

"Manitougache," said Le Jeune, turning to him and speaking with much effort in the savage tongue, "thou wilt go with Father de Noue to Quebec and speak with him to the great commandant. The thunder of the French will speak even louder than the thunder of the English. Do not fear; the great commandant will defend the children of the forest and they shall continue to chase the caribou and the beaver and eat gloriously of the grease of the bear. Do thou only as Anawan will advise thee."

"So, Nicanis, will I do," replied the Indian. "We know that thou lovest us, and that the English do not. We desire that thou wilt remain with us and teach us concerning Him who made all. I believe that He is with us, as thou sayest. But this music of the thunderbird is not agreeable to us. Such reverberation hath been unheard before in this land. Not even the Manitou, the tempest, or the falling of many waters have ever before spoken to us in a voice so loud and fear-compelling."

"There it goes again," exclaimed Father de Noue, as the booming of cannon was once again distinctly heard. "It appears to come from the direction of Quebec. Our French there must be in a panic, and may God in His mercy help the women and children. They suffered terribly when the English were here before, and Father Brebeuf and I were unable to do very much to help them. Their coming again would be a heavy tribulation."

"A tribulation indeed. Would that Father Brebeuf were with us now," replied Le Jeune. "I feel a weakling indeed

in comparison with him. I have heard what a tower of strength he was during the famine and siege, and that even the enemy faltered in his presence. I feel indeed my insignificance when I think of that man of God."

The Superior pressed his hands as he spoke and looked upward. But his companion reassured him :

" You speak too modestly, my Father. Father Brebeuf is no ordinary man, it is true, but we have all our particular aptitudes. He is a man of action above and beyond all. He is happiest in the midst of danger and where the work is heaviest. For that reason the position of Superior with all its petty details and petty responsibilities was irksome to him. He prefers to obey rather than to command ; but you Father, have the gift for both. You have the gift of arousing enthusiasm in others and of getting work done. You have done and are doing very well."

" Perhaps, perhaps. Let us hope that I will do better and that we all will bear ourselves as sons of our Father Ignatius in this crisis," returned the Superior. " Please return from the fort with all speed and let us know what has occurred and what our plan of action is to be. Brother Gilbert and I will attend to everything necessary in the meantime."

Meanwhile Father de Noue had thrown his cloak around him and stepped outside with his Indian companion. With an " Au revoir " to Father Le Jeune and Brother Gilbert, who had also come forward, the two men—as contrasting a couple as could be found, the one a Jesuit priest and former officer of the bedchamber of Henri IV, the other a savage of the Laurentian wilderness who had probably fifty times eaten human flesh—went off rapidly together beyond the stockade surrounding the houses in the direction of the St. Charles River, and through the torn palisade they could be seen to be quickly lost in the dense wood. Father Le Jeune

and the Brother gazed awhile in the direction taken by them and then turned and looked at each other.

"Well, Brother, the martyrdom we have so often desired, may now have begun," were the first words of the Superior. "We had thought it might have come to us by the hands of the savages whom we have come here to succour and convert, but if after crossing all these leagues of ocean it is to come to us by the hands of the English, it is of course well. But we must do all for our French people that we can."

"I have made all preparations for leaving at once, if it is necessary," said Brother Gilbert. "The workmen who were assisting us are preparing to join their brethren in Quebec. Several of the savages slept within the lodge of the workmen last night, and others within the palisade, but they all fled to the woods at the first sound of the cannonading. Has Your Reverence your papers, your books and your dictionary?"

The Superior nodded: "The dictionary I have here in my pocket with my breviary," he said, placing his hand on the side of his cassock where a large bulging protuberance was visible. "To lose that would be to lose a treasure indeed. I have also the grammar and the prayers which I composed with the help of Pierre Pastedechouan. I had hoped to spend the winter with the savages this year, as Father Brebeuf did when he was here. The privations he went through were terrible, but he made great progress in the Algonquin speech. Had the English not taken Quebec from its rightful owners in 1629, four years ago, a Christian and French empire might already have been well begun amid this vast desolation. If the English have come again the conversion of the savages will be indefinitely postponed."

Father Le Jeune had by this time gathered together the

vestments which had been spread out for the morning services. He and the Brother laid them away folded in a roughly hewn cedar chest by the side of the altar. The altar itself was then divested of the few ornaments that adorned it. The lay brother passed in the meantime to the kitchen and quenched the log fire within the circle of stones in its centre. He closed a number of cabinets and chests, arranged the assortment of bark dishes which stood with some earthenware that had been brought from France, and then gathered and threw into a corner of the room the branches of fir on which they had been sitting in savage fashion around the fire the night before. Then he rejoined the Superior in the chapel.

Father Le Jeune was by that time sitting with his eyes raised towards the altar, glancing from time to time at the breviary held open before him. Brother Gilbert placed himself a pace behind him, and the two Jesuits thus remained waiting for whatever intelligence Father de Noue might bring them.

They had not to wait long.

CHAPTER II

THE COMING OF ECHON

STEPS were heard within the palisade and the murmur of excited voices. The bounding figure of Manitougache was the first to enter the mission house, his thick black hair tossed in wild excitement, his bear's cloak under his arm as if he had been running madly, his copper-coloured muscles glistening with perspiration, his arms waving, and his eyes and voluble flow of gutturals indicating that he had great news to tell. He had torn a young sapling out by the roots with his giant strength and, before crossing the threshold, cast it till it lay nestling on the top of the tallest thicket of trees in the vicinity. He whooped and danced his war dance with wondrous contortions while he poured out an unending stream of Algonquin rhetoric from the very pit of his great stomach.

The Father and Brother looked at him and listened in wonder, trying hard to discover the import of his rapid speech.

“ ‘ *Echon* ? ’ ‘ *Chtee* ? ’—what does he mean ? ” cried the Father. “ Has anything happened to *Sieur de Caen* ? *Echon* ? Why, isn't that the savage name for Father Jean Brebeuf ? What does it all mean ? And yet it looks as if the news was good and not bad. When the Montagnais cry *Chtee* they are uttering the last expression of gladness.”

The three of them were now in the open and Manitougache was still stamping the earth in his war dance, bending his

massive body forward, and grasping a javelin in his powerful right hand, which had given the death-blow to innumerable moose and bears. Suddenly he drove his javelin with a fierce thrust nearly halfway into the hard loam, and then, still holding the weapon, moved his arm in a wide circle so that a deep round hole in the earth was thus formed.

Then he turned to the two priests and made motions to them to look.

Holding the javelin at one end, he bent backwards until it looked as though his mane of black hair would sweep the earth at his heels, then with a quick jerk he straightened himself and sent the javelin flying upwards to a dizzy height in the air directly above them. The two Frenchmen watched the javelin mounting high above the tallest of the pines, then wheel slowly at the end of its journey and begin to return. As they watched, an involuntary cry of alarm escaped them both, and they fell backwards. An instant later the javelin had returned and pierced the very centre of the pit in the earth which Manitougache had just dug. Manitougache again danced with joy and the two Jesuits could not help expressing their admiration.

At that moment the sound of distant drums was heard, and, as they listened, Father de Noue ran forward out of the woods, his face beaming. Within a few seconds he reached them, speaking rapidly, with one arm stretched in the air.

"Father Le Jeune and Brother Gilbert," he cried, "I have nothing but good news to tell. What do you think? Sieur de Champlain is once again at Quebec."

He paused to watch the expression on their faces. "He has come in one of two French war vessels which are now anchored in the St. Lawrence opposite the fort. He has two hundred people with him. The guns we heard were not English guns, but French cannon on the ships and in the

fort thundering out their joy. The Fleur-de-lys is everywhere. Quebec is beside itself and everybody is in the streets."

The Fathers embraced each other fervently.

"God in Heaven be praised for His marvellous mercies. Our hearts simply melt within us. You bring us news indeed."

"But that is not all," exclaimed Father de Noue, still breathless after his rapid race from Quebec, in which Manitougache had far outstripped him. "Father Brebeuf has arrived too, and will be with us any minute. There is a lot more that is wonderful to tell, but I will leave it to him to tell it."

"Father Brebeuf? Father Brebeuf?" echoed Le Jeune. "Can it be really possible? Oh, let us hasten to welcome him." And the three Frenchmen moved with long strides within and without, seeking work on which to release their immense relief over the removal of their fears and the unexpected turn events had taken.

The Montagnais natives in the vicinity were never far from the mission house, and a party of them now ran forward, their hair streaming behind them. They were already in possession of the good news and had been watching the French vessels from the forest heights around.

Sieur de Champlain was one of themselves; he had long been their father and protector, and the savage songs of gladness had arisen in the woods. They now tumbled around within and without the Jesuit enclosure, naked, most of them, except for their breech-cloths and moccasins, wild as timber wolves in their unkempt aspect, brown as the earth on which they rolled, their lithe muscles shining with oil and grease.

Meanwhile the priests lost no time, and rapid preparations for welcome were going forward in the mission house to an accompaniment of fluent French and babbling Algonquin speech. The ornaments were restored to the altar. The log fire was again set blazing; kettles were slung, and the sagamité set boiling; the bark and earthenware dishes were drawn from their recesses; the earth floor was swept; the few bits of furniture which the English havoc of the previous year had left in the mission house were set in their places; new branches of spruce and fir were brought in by the savages and laid on the circle round the fire; and a keg of wine was brought from the cellar.

The Jesuits and their Indian helpers were still busy with their preparations when a tall figure suddenly darkened the doorway and stepped into the refectory.

The figure wore the habit common among the Jesuits, but in this case it clothed so noteworthy a personage that the simplicity of the costume appeared rather to accentuate than to obscure his individuality. Two striking black eyes looked from under the broad-brimmed hat. The nose was straight and well formed. The mouth was full and gracefully moulded. The hair and the pointed beard showed a tendency to curl and was of the sort that lay close to the skin and head in natural order without requiring much attention from the owner. Under the black cassock the powerful chest heaved with swelling muscles, in a manner that might have made an observer think of the Crusaders and the athletes at Sparta. But as remarkable as the impression of strength conveyed were the benignancy and composure of the countenance. The figure was of a kind that would have attracted an eye in any company. Suppleness, grace, and a smooth vibrancy were here allied with an extraordinary nobility of port and countenance.

The priests at their different tasks turned round almost together and at once came forward to embrace the visitor, uttering ejaculations of welcome.

"Father Brebeuf, it is really you," cried Le Jeune with deep emotion, but whatever other words of welcome were used were completely drowned by the cries of the savages who were full of rapture at the affection displayed and the joy of the happy meeting.

"*Echon! Echon! Chtee! chtee! chtee! chtee!*" they kept shouting, after their custom when they were pleased, dancing around and looking from one black-robed figure to another.

The stately Brebeuf, whose uncommon height dwarfed those around him, turned and looked at the gesticulating aborigines with an expression of deep happiness. It clearly pleased him to hear his name uttered again by savage voices, for "*Echon*" represented the aboriginal effort to utter the name "*Jean*." He shook the hands of Manitougache and put his arms round one or two of the other Indians, who knew him well, for he had only a short time before spent two years among them. The Jesuits then went into the small chapel and knelt for a space to voice their thanks to Heaven, the Indians trooping after them, and keeping silence evidently with difficulty.

"This is indeed a day of happiness for us, as you can well imagine," exclaimed Le Jeune as they returned again to the refectory. "We had no thought that *Sieur de Champlain* would be here before July. We have been full of trepidation also, for there was news of English ships at Tadoussac. How well everything has turned out."

"I could not get here quickly enough," said Father Brebeuf, without gesture, but bending a constant gaze on his companions in turn. "There are vessels of the English on

the Saguenay, but they are only small trading vessels. We were delayed there ourselves, for the St. Lawrence is still dangerous with floating ice. Father Masse wanted to come up also, but he was compelled to stay behind."

"Is Father Masse at Tadoussac?"

"He is. And Father Daniel and Father Davost are coming to you from the Grand Cibou."

"Then there will be seven of us? That is quite a company. Our mission is beginning to prosper indeed."

"It is prospering even more than you think, Father Le Jeune. The letter which you sent to the Provincial last autumn has been printed and broadcast all over France. It has excited widespread interest. From the king himself to the gamin in the street everybody is talking of Canada. You have no idea of the good you have been enabled to do."

"May God in Heaven be praised. This is good news," cried Le Jeune, raising his eyes. "The signs indeed appear to be favourable."

He then pointed to the sagamité which Brother Gilbert had placed steaming on the rude table of the mission.

"It is a long time, I warrant, since you have tasted the dish of the country. We found peas on our cleared land after the evacuation of the English, in place of the wheat, barley, and Indian corn which Father Lalemant sowed, but these we got from the general storehouse at the fort. The English, when we arrived, sold the full crop of peas, refusing to give them to us for the harvest they found on our lands."

After they had eaten—the Fathers at the table with as many savages as could be accommodated, the rest of the savages holding their ouragans in their hands after their custom, squatting on the spruce branches with which the floor was covered—Father Brebeuf told his eager audience some of the news from home.

He brought so many letters that Father Le Jeune was overcome by the souvenirs and testimonials of affection that came to him from all over France. But in the midst of his happiness his thoughts continually turned to the martyrdom which he knew to be the goal of them all. He read parts of the letter from the Provincial of the Jesuit Order in Paris with streaming eyes. Then he arose from the table and turned his face upward.

"Blessed be He for evermore, if it be His will that in return for these benefits we should drink His cup. Fiat, fiat, that would be too great honour for us. I speak for you all. The way has up to the present been fairly easy for us. But the living martyrdom must soon begin, and the dying martyrdom cannot be far away."

Later the Fathers went to greet *Sieur de Champlain*. They arrived in the vicinity of the fort in time to see a squad of French soldiers, armed with pikes and muskets, ascending the path from the water's edge and beating their drums. The sight was stirring and the small populace was delirious with enthusiasm. The soldiers wore white coats faced with red, and marched with energy and pride. The officers in doublet and cloak carried their swords with them.

The children round the *Hebert* cottage, housing the only family that went back to *Champlain's* settlement, were unrestrained in their cheers. *Sieur de Caen*, the outgoing governor and monopolist, had handed the keys of the fort to *Monsieur du Plessis Bochard*, *Champlain's* lieutenant and general of the fleet, that they might be delivered to *Sieur de Champlain*, newly accredited as Captain of the Royal Navy and Lieutenant of *Monseigneur the Cardinal*, throughout the whole length of the *St. Lawrence*.

Sieur de Champlain was as happy over the meeting as Father *Le Jeune* himself. The returned Governor looked

vigorous despite his burden of years. The head of luxuriant hair and the pointed beard which Le Jeune had seen in France some years before had turned to an iron grey. His eyes were still filled with the old indomitable will and eager enthusiasm that had carried him to regions where no European had set foot before.

Le Jeune noted that he was dressed as carefully as if attending a court function in Paris. He wore the famous breastplate that had won him his sobriquet of "Iron Breast" among the Hurons and Iroquois. Beneath this was a doublet which reached below the waist, unbuttoned at the bottom and showing the shirt in full folds. The trousers were short, going only to the knees, which were covered by the tops of very high kid boots. In place of the rather effeminate ruff which de Caen had affected, he wore a broad, flat, laced white collar which lay on the shoulders. He had a cloak over his left shoulder, and as he greeted the Jesuit he grasped in his left hand a flat hat with broad brim and softly falling plume.

The Jesuit Superior, after exchanging greetings, thanked the great soldier for the kindness shown to the Fathers who had crossed the ocean with him, a kindness that was great and unceasing, as Father Brebeuf had testified, and then took his leave. The other priests had gone to visit the vessels in the river and to assist Father Brebeuf in carrying to Notre Dame des Anges what had been sent to the mission house from France. The Father Superior took the usual road in the direction of the St. Charles River and paused for a moment, before descending into the woods, to gaze at the vessels below.

The vessels made a beautiful sight with the white flags flying at their masts and looking like toys in that noble river whose sheet of purest silver might have held all the

ships in the world. The Jesuit's eyes dwelt affectionately on Champlain's famous barque. There she was carrying her little square sail under her bowsprit, without jibs, her spanker lateen-like. He could see that when she was going her mainsail had good hoist and spread. She carried her six sails on her three pole masts, and the tallest mast looked nearly eighty feet from step to truck. She lay deep in the water with her stone ballast, and she had a rope-tackle tiller and three cabins on the poop. It appeared to him that she displaced more than a hundred tons. Both the ships and the strand were alive with sailors, marines, and newly arrived settlers. The Superior could not contain his enthusiasm.

"Praise for evermore," he murmured. "Canada is securely French again, and the English menace is removed. The mission to the savages is fairly launched and nothing can now stop the good work."

As he passed on, the tangled undergrowth moved and a semi-naked figure, so ferociously wild in aspect that had Father Le Jeune seen it he might have thought it a demon from the underworld, straightened upward and took the post on the rock which the Jesuit had just vacated. The figure gazed for a long time with a malignant intensity of curiosity first at the retreating Jesuit and then in the direction of Champlain's fort and at the people and the ships below, and then melted like a shadow into the entanglement of shrubs and trees that led to the river.

Had Father Le Jeune been aware of it, here was the representative of a savage power that was to prove more of a menace to the French mission than all the power of England. The war which Champlain, in alliance with the Algonquins and the distant Hurons, had initiated with the most implacable of Indian confederacies had seen only its

first skirmishes. It was to be re-enacted amid scenes of grief and horror never imagined on this side of the grave.

The tomahawks were being again ruthlessly sharpened in the valley of the Mohawk ; the new arquebuses were being assembled and polished and primed ; the Senecas, the Onondagas, the Cayugas, the Oneidas, and the Mohawks were singing their war-songs of the Five Iroquois Nations and cleaving the warposts with their hatchets ; and the quenchless Iroquois passion for vengeance was summoning all its stealthy force and unsurpassed cunning to turn the paradise of the St. Lawrence into a valley of immeasurable suffering and despair.

CHAPTER III

BLACK ROBE AND IROQUOIS

SEVERAL days after the arrival of Brebeuf Father Le Jeune took him round the houses and grounds of Notre Dame des Anges to show him what the English had done to the mission headquarters during their occupation of Quebec.

The Recollets had preceded the Jesuits in the Indian missions of the St. Lawrence and for ten years the grey friars had ministered to colonists and savages in the Canadian woods all the way from the fishing and trading outpost of Tadoussac to the shores of Lake Huron. Le Jeune pointed towards the blackened ruin of the stone house built by them near by on the same bank of the St. Charles, with ditches and outworks for defence, in a clearing in the forest where more than a dozen years before they had begun a farm with hogs, two asses, a pair of geese, seven pairs of fowl, and four pairs of ducks.

"You recall when the Recollet Fathers were the only agriculturists in the colony beside the Hebert family?" he said. "Well, look at their residence now. The English treated it more wantonly, even, than they treated the property of the Jesuits."

Brebeuf walked a pace or two among the trees to look at the Recollet ruin. It was there that he and two other Jesuits had been hospitably received eight years before, when the Jesuits opened their mission at Quebec, and the Huguenot,

de Caen, had refused to lodge them at the fort. It was there they had dwelt till new missionaries arrived with a score of workmen, and the Jesuits were enabled to build Notre Dame des Anges on the very spot where Jacques Cartier had wintered ninety years before.

It was from there he had left for the Huron country when the news came that the Hurons of the summer trading fleet which was descending to Quebec had, in the midst of a tempest, superstitiously cast Father Nicholas Viel and an Indian neophyte into the foaming torrent of the Sault au Recollet, which was thenceforth to be known as his sepulchre.

And now that deserted ruin spoke with mute eloquence of the departed Recollets who, barefoot except for their wooden sandals, coarsely clad in gown and hood, had battled with such meagre resources against all the powers of a ferocious heathendom. And now the Jesuits had succeeded to that living and dying martyrdom which the Recollets had formerly so devoutly embraced. Brebeuf said nothing, but Le Jeune appeared to have little difficulty in reading his thoughts.

The residence which the Jesuits had built before the surrender of Quebec in 1629 and the brief English régime which followed, was not much to boast of. The more important of the two buildings was about forty feet long and thirty feet wide. Brebeuf was familiar with every part of it, for he had helped in building it, and had dwelt in it before and after his former mission among the Hurons.

It was here that the Fathers and their companions slept and lived. The house consisted of one story, a garret, and a cellar, and it was partitioned into four principal rooms, of which the first served as chapel, the second as refectory, another as kitchen, and the last as lodging for the workmen. Four cells opened from the refectory, with two couches in each

of them, and here lodged the Fathers and the lay brothers, some of whom, when the residence was crowded, took refuge in the garret, which was reached by a ladder.

The English, while in occupation at Quebec, had, after the expulsion of the Fathers, made good use of the habitation and so had largely spared it, though they had ruined the doors, the sashes and the windows. They had been less forbearing towards the second building which had served as a barn, bakery, stable and carpenter's workshop. As the two Jesuits walked around it, it presented a sorry sight, half of it burned to the ground and the other half covered with mud. They turned with relief to the palisades which surrounded the two buildings, and which had also suffered greatly from the depredations of the English. But they saw the area less as it was than as it was going to be. Before a year was to pass the mission headquarters were going to be enclosed by twelve hundred poles of fir trees fifteen feet high, making a splendid court of about a hundred feet square, with gates swinging on their hinges and strongly bound with iron.

Le Jeune led the way to the cultivated clearings.

"Look well here, Father," he said to his companion, not without a touch of pride. "You may be sure that this was one of the first places we visited once we got off our ship. Father de Noue and Brother Gilbert and I had not been a day here before we began to work and dig the earth again, to sow purslane and turnips, and to plant lentils, and everything grew so well that a short time after we were able to gather our salad."

"That is very fine," said Father Brebeuf, as he walked along the tilled and seeded lands, as beautifully laid out as any similar garden in France. "When I was last here a great portion of our cleared lands was covered with wheat,

barley and Indian corn. These with the crops on Madame Hebert's land were a great help to the French in the fort during the famine and the siege."

"They must have been. How our poor French suffered at that time. But whatever crops were left by you on these lands at the time of your departure for France were commandeered by the English, who made no attempt to renew them. When we arrived we found our cleared lands covered with peas, and even these were not permitted to be left to us, for Captain Kirke had the full crop gathered and sold, refusing to give us any portion of them. It is a great thing that such people have left our house and the entire country."

As the Superior spoke a commotion was heard in the depth of the woods and both religious stopped to look and listen. Savage voices were heard, some in loud raillery and laughter, others raised in songs of the peculiar Algonquin cadence, deep-chested and full of gladness. The tom-tom of a drum was heard and the rattle of the tortoise-shell. Presently dark figures were seen advancing under the shade of the tall pines in the direction of the mission house.

The figures became more distinct as they issued from the woods, and the two priests saw that they were painted and feathered for a festal day. But the festivity was no ordinary one. To the Frenchmen they looked much like the masqueraders who ran around in France in every form of grotesque make-up during Carnival time. There were some in the party whose noses were painted blue, the eyes, eyebrows and cheeks painted black, and the rest of the face red; and the colours were not dull, but oleaginous and shining like those of French masks. Others had black, red and blue stripes drawn from the ears to the mouth. Still others were entirely black, except for the upper part of the brow and

around the ears and the end of the chin, where the natural chocolate colour showed.

Some of the warriors carried only one black stripe, like a wide ribbon, drawn from one ear to the other across the eyes, and three short stripes on the cheeks. The hair of most of them, usually long, greasy and shining, was tied behind, and adorned with feathers of the eagle and the hawk. Nearly all of them were naked, except for two pieces of figured buckskin which fell to the thighs from a cord of dried elk intestine which held it round the middle. They carried their carved shields and hunter's quivers of arrows slung behind them and their bows of birch, and the hands of some of them played with their figured and painted clubs and tomahawks.

As soon as they saw the priests the savages increased the hullabaloo and danced in their direction. The leader of the group and the tallest and most demonstrative and most elaborately dressed made at once for Father Brebeuf and opened his mouth in an expansive smile.

"Why, if it isn't Echon!" he cried with immense enthusiasm. "My brothers, Echon is with us again. Beloved, I had heard that thou hadst returned, but it did not occur to me that I should see thee today."

Father Brebeuf gazed at the savage a moment and then began to laugh. He had recognised him under his war paint as Carigonan, a Tadoussac Montagnais native, the most famous medicine man of the country, with whom he had wintered during the hunting south of the St. Lawrence six years before. It is little wonder that the Jesuit did not at once recognise the medicine man, for his apparel comprised almost as great a mixture of curiosities as the ornaments and apparel of all the rest of his companions put together.

He carried on his shoulders the entire skin of a yellow

bear, of which the glaring head hung over one shoulder and was evidently intended to be used as a mask, while the huge claws dangled at his wrists and ankles. In his right hand he clutched an immense tortoise-shell rattle and in his left a sorcerer's spear or magic wand. To the fur of the bear and the rings and girdles on his body were attached extraordinary medleys and mixtures from the kingdoms of the birds, the beasts and the plants. There were skins of snakes writhing as in life, there were frogs and bats and muskrats and horned owls, the hoofs of deer, and goats and antelopes and paws of the wolf and catamount, and as he moved they moved with him and seemed to share his activity.

The savages danced round the black robes and talked to them in the Montagnais dialect of Algonquin, which Le Jeune was laboriously striving to learn, but in which Brebeuf had formerly become proficient.

"Carigonan, my beloved, I am happy to see thee," said Brebeuf to the medicine man, picking his words with the effort of one renewing a neglected knowledge of the savage tongue. "Thou comest hither in festival array. Whither goest thou with thy brothers? Or perhaps it were meet to say, Whence comest thou? Hath fortune smiled on the tribe? Did the elks wait patiently for the spears of thy brethren in the chase, or have their nets wooed the fishes of the flowing waters in great profusion that perchance an eat-all feast is in preparation for thee?"

"No, Beloved," responded the medicine man, readjusting his bear's cloak, "it is not because of an eat-all feast that we thus rejoice, though we doubt not that an eat-all feast is not far away. We rejoice and are thus painted and arrayed for a visit to him who is our father, the great captain, who has so often protected us. When we heard the thunder in our

woods we lit the council fire and prepared to go to see him. We rejoice at his return. Having seen him we have come to see the captains among the black robes." And he waved his bear's claws in the direction of the Fathers.

"We rejoice also because we are going to eat Iroquois tonight," cried another savage coming forward, tapping himself on his naked belly and rolling his eyes. "Perchance the black robes will join us in partaking of the flesh of their enemies as well as ours."

The Fathers were both startled at this speech and looked at each other. Suddenly both saw themselves on the brink of a yawning abyss of savagery and felt how thin was the partition that separated them from the chaos of the jungle. Beneath the expansive smiles of these savages and the superficial amity they displayed lurked a dark ferocity more dangerous than the ruthlessness of hungry timberwolf or prowling panther. Here was calculated cruelty, patient and unrelenting, and directed with superlative cunning. They knew of the ancient feud between Iroquois and Algonquin, and that war parties had recently returned to Quebec and Tadoussac carrying with them some Iroquois prisoners. They exchanged glances of understanding, and then awaited to hear more, conscious of the implacability of their interlocutors, but hoping in some way to succour the captives.

"Does *Sieur de Champlain* know about the prisoners?" asked *Le Jeune* of the medicine man.

"Yes," answered the savage, "he offered us presents, but these Iroquois must burn. So hath it been decreed in council and so will it be. The Iroquois in Tadoussac have already received their deserts. We can do no less. Our brethren who have suffered at the Mohawk's hands would repudiate us in the village of souls, if we were not to do to them as they have done to us."

The arrogance of the Algonquin savage was as inexorable as his ferocity, and both Fathers felt that any remonstrances from them on that occasion would count but little. They invited the savages into the mission house and provided them with porringers of peas. In the meanwhile it was agreed that Le Jeune should seek an eleventh-hour interview with *Sieur de Champlain*, to see if there was any loophole by which the Iroquois prisoners could be saved, while Brebeuf would follow the painted warriors to the savage village behind Cape Diamond, on the offchance that he might give some solace to the victims, and might even, if they proved amenable, pour over them the saving waters of baptism.

Dusk had fallen when Brebeuf arrived, by a path in the forest formerly familiar to him, at the cabins of the savages. The pine fires were blazing madly, and through every opening and crevice in the bark lodges the smoke poured heavily upward, carrying numerous sparks with it. Loud and excited laughter greeted his ears and the usually gentle voices of Indian maiden and squaw were this night raised high and mingled in shrill cadence with the guttural "Ho ! ho ! ho !" and voluble exclamations of the braves. Brebeuf, as he entered the village, passed the place for drying eels, the chief sustenance of the Montagnais in summer, but he had not gone far when he encountered three ominous-looking stakes, newly erected. A step farther and he encountered some of the painted braves who had been at the mission house that afternoon.

"Thou art most welcome, Echon," said one of them in great glee ; "we are glad that thou hast come. The first burning will take place in the cabin of the war captain and thou must come in there with us. I warrant thee that thou shalt have much pleasure tonight."

"Pleasure, sayest thou ? Pleasure is not what I seek,

Nicanis," responded the black robe, "but to do the will of Him who made all. We French take no pleasure in torturing human beings even if they are Iroquois. To us it is far more pain than pleasure."

"And to us it is a pleasure even greater than eating," was the quick reply of the savage. "What wouldst thou? Thou hast no courage if thou wouldst permit thine enemies to live. Must we be less warriors than the Iroquois? When they capture us do they not do still worse? That is why we treat them as cruelly as we can. Enter thou the war-cabin. I warrant thee that the women and girls will do their utmost tonight."

As a matter of fact Brebeuf observed a crowd of women and girls clamorously and excitedly giving presents to the warriors; and he knew very well what this bribing meant. The women were seeking to be assured of liberty to torment their victims to their hearts' content.

Brebeuf blinked as he entered the cabin of the war captain, for the glare was great and the smoke poured outwards in acrid volume as the piece of bark that served as door was lifted. He heard voices both near and distant crying, "Sit thee here, Echon," and when the smoke lifted he saw that the cabin was thickly crowded. It was the largest cabin in the village, very long and narrow, the seat of the council of elders, the scene of the greatest festivities, and through the smoke he could barely descry the farther end of it.

There were three immense fires in the middle, each a few paces from the other and burning fiercely. A great number of light cedar shields, painstakingly planed, decorated and reinforced with skin and leather, hung on the walls, alternating with bows and quivers and spears and wampum belts.

Brebeuf looked upward towards the opening in the cedar bark roof and was pleased to see the sky in which the stars were beginning to shine, the one thing within the compass of his vision that did not recall to him the demons and hell. Men and women and children squatted thickly pell-mell together, naked or almost naked, leaving an unobstructed lane along the fires, but so close to it that many of them, particularly among the women, were already holding embers in their hands as the perspiration poured down their roasting bodies and faces. Everybody was gesticulating ; everybody was speaking ; some sang fierce war songs, and imitated the howls and cries of the animals of the forest.

Brebeuf threaded his way to a corner in the lodge where he could be near the prisoners, and innumerable were the observations, full of joy and banter, directed at his tall stature and his pointed beard, which in addition to his habit was something grotesque and incomprehensible to savage custom. He had scarcely taken his seat on the branches of fir, which served as seats in the cabin, when a vast hubbub began and three of the prisoners were brought in.

Brebeuf looked at them with the utmost curiosity, for the Iroquois had become a figure of dread to every one of the surrounding nations ; and in truth their appearance was wild enough. They had already been severely handled. Their nails had been torn out by their captors' teeth ; some fingers had been lost in the same manner ; and their naked bodies were covered with contusions and wounds.

" To which of the Five Nations do the prisoners belong ? " Brebeuf asked an elder near him, who sat gazing at the scene with a certain gravity.

" They are Mohawks," he replied, " the most embittered of our enemies, because perhaps the nearest. It is believed

that these have been involved in the killing of your Frenchmen."

Brebeuf had heard this before and he did not pay much attention to it. It was a way the savages had of trying to extinguish French sympathy with the prisoners.

"Do you know their ages?" he asked again.

"The eldest has probably seen sixty winters, and the middle one perhaps thirty. But the boy is young. Summer hath perhaps come and gone fifteen times since he was delivered from the womb of his mother. It was he that *Sieur de Champlain* desired to save."

Brebeuf felt his heart overflowing with sympathy for this youngster of the woods, whose dark eyes nevertheless flashed a bold defiance in the faces of the judges who had condemned him to a lingering and ignominious death. The hubbub had by this time partly ceased and the prisoners, at the command of their captors, had begun to sing, according to savage ritual, trying hard to hold their voices firm to show the Iroquois warrior was not afraid of death, no matter how cruel it might be. The singing affected the Jesuit strangely, as well it might—the cadence was funereal, and ended with reiterated aspirations: "Oh! oh! oh! ah! ah! ah! hem! hem! hem!"

The crowd listened to the singing with strained ears for a time, opening their mouths wide and keeping their eyes fixed on the victims. Then impatient voices called on them to dance. The prisoners immediately began. The white-haired warrior rose first and danced down the cabin, stamping his feet on the ground while he marched, bending his body, and singing continuously.

Meanwhile his torturers, delirious with joy, clapped their hands and slapped their thighs, drawing aspirations from the depths of their stomachs, which undulated with laughter.

As he passed, the women, in extreme excitement, applied burning brands to every part of his body, and bent down, extending their cheeks, and blowing and stirring the flames in the direction of the victim. This performance was repeated also in the case of the boy and young man till the crowd had its fill of that form of cruelty and began to hunger for other forms. In a short time all filed out for the final scenes and execution.

Brebeuf during the respite that followed concentrated his efforts on saving the boy and finally received a promise from the elders whom he consulted that he would be spared till word was heard from *Sieur de Champlain*, who would probably provide suitable presents. He returned to find the aged Iroquois and his other companion being tied to the stakes by their wrists with cords, which had been pulled so tightly that the withes entered the flesh and broke their bones. Deep groans escaped both prisoners, but these were drowned by the savage cries of their executioners.

Meanwhile the men stood away and permitted the squaws and girls to vent their fury. Fires had been made in front of each prisoner, near enough to burn him, but not near enough to extinguish his life in one quick conflagration. Women and girls fed the fire fiercely. Other women were armed with burning embers, and these they applied to the most sensitive parts of the bodies of the prisoners, howling incessantly the while.

They pricked the prisoners with awls, they bit them with savage glee, they laid their flesh open with knives. They gathered the red embers and threw the fire upon the prisoners, burning coals, and hot sand ; and when the sufferers cried out, their torturers cried still louder, that their groans might not be heard, and that pity might be stilled.

When this had gone on to the point of satiety the women called to the men. With that a warrior stepped forward and flashed a knife in the air, seizing the scalp of the eldest prisoner with his left hand. A quick curve of the knife, a deep groan from the victim, and the scalp was held dripping in the air, while the women threw hot sand on the exposed skull before them.

Both prisoners were already boiling in kettles when the crowd turned to their principal prisoner, a powerful Iroquois captain, whose courage and defiance promised to furnish the great spectacle of the evening. Brebeuf beheld in this new victim a splendid type of warrior, magnificently moulded, and maintaining his masterful bearing despite all his wounds. Sick at heart with what he had already witnessed, and grieving that men so nobly formed should be wasted in a feud so wanton, the Jesuit walked up to him.

"Art thou not afraid of facing death?" he asked in the Huron dialect, which, being closely allied to Iroquois speech, he knew would be partially intelligible to the Mohawk.

"Not in the least," replied the warrior, speaking calmly, yet eyeing Brebeuf's costume with manifest curiosity. "I have taken a great many Montagnais, and my friends will take still more of them. They will avenge my death."

"Where is thy home?" asked Brebeuf.

"My home?" echoed the Iroquois. "Beside the Schoharie and the Mohawk, near the village of the Flemish captain who has sold us arquebuses to kill the Algonquins and who trades for furs which he sends in floating islands of wood across the great ocean."

As he spoke a rapt look came into the eyes of the doomed warrior, and Brebeuf felt his heart melting in pity. He saw that his thought had wandered far away and that he was once again in the home of his nation, walking amid its waving

fields of grain, its placid lakes, its shaded rivers, and the happy security of its palisaded towns.

He saw him look towards the moon that hovered in silver radiance over the great shadow of Cape Diamond, as it shone also on his home, and gazed on the clear sky above in which the stars were shining with a brilliance such as they reveal only to the deep aisles of the forest. He saw him turn his head to look at the tall spruce trees, the pines, the poplars waving mournfully above him as they waved on the banks of the Schoharie. He seemed for a moment to have lost consciousness of the presence of his enemies who formed a deep shadow round him. Then he began to speak in sad cadence :

“ Farewell, my father and my mother ; farewell, my brothers ; farewell, my wife, my sons and my daughters ; farewell, my brethren ; farewell, my friends ; farewell, you happy band of warriors and hunters who taught me how to pierce the hawk with my arrow and the elk with my spear ; farewell you, who taught me to speed my canoe over the Onondaga lake swifter than the wind that brings the thunder bird.

“ Farewell you, who taught me to pass through the close leaves of the forest as if the ghost of a zephyr had touched them ; farewell, my father and my teachers who taught me to lie more inanimate than the dead log in the forest and creep more stealthy than the serpent ; farewell you placid lakes and pleasant streams ; the soul of Teohoran would fain abide with you, but it was not to be. I know that you will avenge my death a hundredfold. I have prepared for battle and the fire from my youth up, and I fear nothing that the Montagnais can do.”

There was cunning in this last utterance, which the Iroquois repeated in various forms, for, knowing his death was certain, the quicker it came to him the sooner his agony

would be over. However the Montagnais were not to be taken in. They had listened in silence to the apostrophe he had uttered and even showed a certain sympathy. But the taunts of the prisoner brought all the memory of Iroquois ruthlessness to life again.

Vicious hands suddenly seized him and cut off his fingers. They broke the bones of his arms and tore the scalp from his head. Then men and women roasted his flesh on every side, yelling wildly in the savage eagerness of their cruelty, but careful that the torture should be prolonged and that they should not be cheated of their prey by a sudden fatal termination. With this end in view the prisoner at the end of an hour was untied, permitting him to rest and so acquire a fresh lease of endurance.

A terrifying scene followed. The victim, scorched and roasted from head to foot, but still full of sensibility, once loose from the withes that had held him, shot straight for the cooling waters of the river near by, his mob of torturers in full cry. It was not clear whether he was seeking a merciful death or escape. Certainly he thirsted for the waters both to drink and to bathe his palpitating flesh. But swift and violent hands seized him and bore him back to the scene of torture.

Once again, with redoubled fury and cunning, the flames were made to encompass him on every side till he became a blackened writhing mass of fearful aspect. It may have been a refinement of cruelty. It may have been his greased and molten body would not permit him to be held. But the scarcely living Iroquois was permitted once again to leap outside the circle of his enemies and make a second poor attempt to escape. But in this renewed attempt his strength quickly failed him and he was again brought back and cruelly burnt.

At last he died in the midst of his sufferings. But the enmity of his foes was not to be permitted to end there. When they saw their victim fall he was already grilled and cooked for the eating. Mauling the executed sagamore with hungry arms, they opened his chest and tore out his heart and portioned it among their children to eat, that their unfledged warriors might so acquire something of his pitiful courage. The rest of the body was divided among the adult cannibals.

It was well after midnight when Brebeuf had left the savage cabins behind him and started to wend his way back to the mission house. The coolness and silence of the woods were soothing indeed after the terrorism he had witnessed, the smell of roasting and steaming and perspiring human flesh, the glimpse into the inferno that dwelt in the untamed heart of man. He felt as much sympathy with the executioners as with the victims, for he knew the savage rule of warfare held them to an inexorable law, and annihilation faced victor and vanquished alike.

"Would that they in France could see what I have seen tonight," he cried almost aloud in his anguish. "Surely such a spectacle would melt a heart of bronze. Why have we not a hundred missionaries here to destroy this kingdom of Satan on earth? From this day on, every breath, every movement of the body, every aspiration of my soul, will be devoted to the extinction of this cruel savagery, and the extension of Christ's kingdom in this wilderness."

The energy of his thought had quickened his pace, and he had paddled across the St. Charles and was already within the mission enclosure, before he became conscious of his surroundings. The mission house was dark, though the gleam of a dying fire shone on the refectory window. He did not cross the threshold at once, but stood still with his

head in the air. He liked looking at the tops of the tall pines ; he liked listening to the rustle of their leaves, which seemed to him like the surface movement of a great sea. The rustle of those leaves went like a wave of the sea over an unbroken forest, hundreds of leagues long, away to the Huron country and beyond.

He continued looking at the shadow of the trees ; but what he actually saw was the incarnadined upright figure of the Iroquois chief, resisting with a will of steel his immense burden of pain. He saw the ridge of fierce hair, the blazing eyeballs and the clenched marble jaws. And then in his imagination the face changed to another, though the figure remained the same. This time, it seemed to the Jesuit that the face had become strangely like his own. As he looked into the future a strong, shuddering tremor went through him. But he quickly righted himself.

“ I will be ground to powder before I go back by so much as a hairsbreadth,” he breathed, pressing his hands together so that his arms trembled.

A moment later the door of the mission house closed behind him.

CHAPTER IV

THE WILDERNESS GONDOLAS

BREBEUF and two of the Fathers who had come to Quebec with him were destined for the Huron mission field where, in the heart of the Great Lakes country, the congregation of stable and populous agricultural towns, clusters of bark cabins within stout palisades, provided a far more hopeful field for missionary effort than the migratory huts of Montagnais, Bersiamite, and Algonquin who followed the trail of elk and caribou along the lower St. Lawrence.

It was with eager eyes therefore, as the summer advanced, that Brebeuf and his companions searched the St. Lawrence for the savage fleets, carrying their cargoes of tobacco and furs, then due from the uplands of the Ottawa and the regions of the lakes. They were not long in coming. Brebeuf had not been many days at Quebec before he saw from the cliffs eighteen canoes from the nations nearest on the banks of the Ottawa bearing rich cargoes of beaver skin.

There was however more in their arrival than met the eye. Word had come to Sieur de Champlain that the real destination of the Ottawa savages was not Quebec but the English traders at Tadoussac, whose three vessels stood at the mouth of the Saguenay, with another barque higher in the river. He called a council of the newcomers whose canoes had stopped to surround the French vessels in the river.

The Ottawas had erected their bark lodges on the shore

beneath the fort, and thither the Governor, accompanied by Father Brebeuf, with the interpreter, Jean Nicollet, and a company of officers, went to speak to them. The savage visitors squatted in a circle on the ground between the cabins, with the elders in the centre, and Champlain and his company in front of them. The Governor had on this occasion donned the carved and polished breastplate which had served him well in many a battle in the wilderness. He took the hands of several of the chiefs who were known to him from days gone by. The savages were most of them fine looking men, hardened and bronzed with unceasing toil in sun and tempest, not looking in the least fatigued after their paddling through innumerable rapids and carrying heavy loads over as many portages.

Champlain greeted the Ottawas kindly and offered them the hospitality of Quebec. Then he came to the purpose of the council.

"You know well, my brothers, who are come to us from beyond the cascades and the Allumette Islands, that we from the land of France, whom you have spoken of from olden times as dwellers and workers in habitations of wood and islands that float on the waters, have always loved and defended you, and that he who speaks to you this happy day has assisted you in person in your wars. I knew very well and greatly cherished Orant, the father of your sagamore and captain, who has led and counselled you in this expedition, who is now listening to me, and you will recall that that venerable warrior was killed by my side in a battle many years ago in a town of the Iroquois, the bitterest enemies of yourselves and us, in which battle I myself was wounded with an arrow."

The savages appeared to be quite familiar with this chapter in history, and the recollection which the Governor

evoked appeared to move them. A chorus of subdued exclamations appeared to arise from the depths of their stomachs. "Ho! ho! ho! haaw! ham! ham!" was the profound aspiration of approval that escaped them. All kept their eyes on the speaker and all wore the usual Indian expression in council of great gravity.

Champlain observed the effect produced and warmed to his theme.

"Now, my brothers, all of you are well aware that I am a man of my word, and, as you see, notwithstanding the discomforts of a voyage over the great ocean which separates this land from the land of France, I have returned to you again, as if you were my brothers in blood as you are in my heart. For you had expressed the desire that a French settlement should be made in your country, to defend you against the incursions of your enemies, and that is one of the reasons that I am here again amongst you. For I have long contemplated granting you this desire, and it would have been already granted had it not been for the obstacles created by the English. We are indeed at this very time engaged in repairing the ruins which these wicked guests have left behind them, and we will not fail to satisfy your desires when we have attended to more urgent affairs."

Then the speaker pointed to Father Brebeuf, whose imposing stature and athletic grace had attracted the eyes of the warriors among them, and who stood near the Governor with Father de Noue at his side.

"Mark you well these our Fathers, whom you speak of as the black robes," he said, "and who you know are here to serve you and to serve you almost alone. They will remain among you and will instruct you and your children. They have served you in the past and will serve you in the future. They are sent to you by the great king of France and the

great French people who love you. And yet, notwithstanding the great obligations you are all under to the French, you have descended the river with the intention of going to see the thieves who before came to pillage the French.

“Consider well, my brothers, what you are doing and what you are going to do. These robbers from the islands of Europe are mere birds of passage, while the French are here to remain for ever in the land that belongs to them. Is it not better far to be in league with those who are your neighbours and your hosts than with those who dwell in distant lands, who do not love you, but are friendly only to use you, and who, when it suits their purpose, will destroy you as ruthlessly as the Iroquois enemy, whose menace grows every day, and who are being provided by them with the irons of thunder and death that carry consternation to you all?”

The Frenchmen well understood that rhetoric was an instrument of tremendous potency among the Indians. It was their law, their government, the god of their idolatry, the leading weapon of peace in their councils, the measure of wisdom and illumination among their senators and leaders.

The orator stood next to the warrior and war captain in influence in the council of war as well as in peace. After war and the chase and feasting it was their chief occupation, and first of the arts among them. It swayed them and they swayed others with it, and there was not a nation among them that had not its professed rhetoricians who explored the earth and the waters and the heavens for their figures of speech.

They sat therefore with great expectancy to hear the reply of Orant, the Ottawa chief, who had succeeded to the name of his ancestor, and they were not disappointed. They marked the exceeding grace with which the painted and feathered savage took the forum and were astonished to find

how easily he won them by the humility of his opening words.

"You behold, O my brothers from the land of France," began the captain in subdued tones, spreading his porcelain-ringed arms, and bowing low his splendid warrior's figure, till the eagle's feathers and porcupine quills stood upright from his war locks, "you behold before you, as you know, only a poor little animal, that can do little more than crawl on the ground; while you Frenchmen are the great of the earth who make all tremble in your presence. I hardly know how it comes to me that I am able to stand and talk in the presence of captains so powerful and so great. Had I a counsellor behind me who would be able to suggest to me what I should say meet to this occasion, confidence and valour would come to me and I might be able to speak out more boldly than I do.

"But as I stand here alone I am full of bewilderment; I recall that no instruction has ever been given to me, for my father left me when I was very young. If I do say anything at any time, I go seeking it here and there, searching for the word at hazard and not always finding it. And it is this that makes me tremble."

Here the orator spread his feet wide and held his arms before him, as though seeking to sustain himself. With every figure of speech he made gestures to add illumination to the phrase.

"Thou tellest us, O Captain of the French, that thou and thy people have loved us truly and from the beginning. Thou speakest well indeed, and we on our part would lie indeed if we sought to say a word to the contrary. Thou sayest that thou thyself hast always been true to us. Again thou speakest well, and we have believed thee. Thou hast said that thou hast been our help and our defender in wars.

Again thou speakest truly, and we love thee for it. What wilt thou that we on our part should answer to thee ? What can we answer ? Every word thou hast said is true.

“ Thou sayest that the French have come to live at Quebec to defend us, and that thou thyself wilt come into our country to protect us. I remember well to have heard our fathers say that, when you were below in the deep, still waters of the Saguenay, the Montagnais went to see you, and invited you, unknown to us, to ascend the river above these hills, where our fathers, having seen you, loved you, and prayed you to make your home in the valleys of Stadacona.

“ Thou hast said that our fathers and we have asked the French to make a settlement at Three Rivers and among the islands and rapids of our land. As to that I am only a child ; no recollection comes to me ; I do not know that I myself even have asked for it. You French have your Massinahigan ; you have your written records, which make you remember all things. We have nothing but our wampum belts and our own frail memories. But however that may be, thou and the French will be welcome there and always welcome.”

Here the softly falling feather of Champlain's broad-brimmed hat gently swept the face of Brebeuf who sat by his side. The Governor was bending towards him.

“ Mark you, Father Brebeuf,” he asked, “ the discretion of this savage rhetorician ? He desires to make it plain that it is not his people alone who desire this settlement but the French as well. These savages have good minds, but this man has the keenness of a Cicero.”

Father Brebeuf smiled and continued to listen intently. He felt he would sooner listen to this savage than the best dialectician in the colleges of France. As he gave ear he made notes of the figures of speech he would like to retain.

"When you shall come up the great river to our homes," the orator was proceeding, "you shall find a land far superior to this where you are. You shall erect, to begin with, a house like this to dwell in"—here the orator indicated a small space with his hand—"that is to say, you will make a fortress. Then you shall make another house like that"—here he swept his arm so as to designate a much larger space—"and then we shall be no longer dogs who sleep outside in the forest and the open, we shall enter into those houses."

"He means to speak of an enclosed village," murmured Champlain at this point.

"Then," went on the orator, "we shall be suspected no longer of going to see those that do not love us. You shall sow wheat; we shall do as you do, and we shall no longer seek our living in the woods. Then it will be possible for us at last to cease being wanderers and vagabonds following the birds and beasts without a home.

"It was your *Sieur de Caen* who conceived in his mind that I and my people had sent beavers to the foreigners down the river, and in part he conceived truly. Some moose skins I did send to those quarters, but they were not sent in trade, but to cut off the arms of our enemies. Thou knowest well, O Captain, that our foes, the Iroquois, have powerful, long arms. If we had not cut them off, we should have been taken by them long ago. I sent presents to those tribes, who were their neighbours, to the end that they should not unite with them. So you see that anything we have done was done, not to offend the French, but to preserve our own lives.

"Thou hast given expression to thy fear that we might take our canoes to the English. But I will now counsel my men that they should not go there. I give thee my promise that neither I myself, nor those endowed with sense amongst us, will go near the foreigners. But if there are young men

among us who will jump from our midst and go there without being seen, I shall know not what to do. Thou knowest well that youth cannot be easily restrained. I shall myself forbid everyone from going to Tadoussac. Anyone who does so has no sense. Thou canst do all that seems good to thee, and place thy boats in the way and intercept and seize the beavers of those who attempt to go against our counsel.

“Thou sayest that the black-robed Fathers will come to live among us and will teach us. This good fortune will be for our children: we, who are old, will die ignorant. This blessing will not come any sooner than we should like to have it.”

Then the eloquent old captain went into his peroration: “Thou sayest that we must be careful as to what we should do. Our ears are open to thee. Grasp us by the arm, and we shudder. Grasp us afterwards by the heart, and our whole body trembles. We do not want to go to the English. Their captain wanted to make an alliance with me and take me for his brother, and I did not desire it. I withdrew myself, saying to him that he was too great a captain. I bethought myself of a promise that thou hadst made to us, that thou wouldst return; therefore I always awaited thee. Thou hast been truthful and thou hast returned. Thou wilt still be truthful in coming to see us in our country. I have but one fear; and that is that in the association of our people with the French, mishaps may arise, and that someone will be killed. Then all would be lost. Thou knowest all are not prudent, but that the wise ones will always do their duty.”

As the orator sat down, an astonished chorus of murmuring arose among the French. All could not understand everything the captain had said, but even the newcomers were able to appraise the grace of his sweeping gestures, the supple movements of the bronzed muscles, the rising and

falling inflection of the voice, which might have served as a model to the most practised rhetorician. And the beauty of it was that it was natural and unconscious. Those skilled in Algonquin speech sought to give some knowledge to the others of the verbal grace and delicacy of what they had heard.

Sieur de Champlain showed himself greatly pleased with the assurances given by the Ottawa elder. He noted too that he had spoken the general mind of the savage company, for the deep-chested aspirations of the warriors, who sat or lay in a wide variety of postures, "Ho ! haaw ! ham !" had punctuated all the vital parts of the address. He rose and responded in a few friendly words. Then he added :

"When the great house we all desire shall be built, then our young men will marry your daughters, and we shall be one people."

This speech had a very pleasing effect on the Ottawa men, who all began to laugh.

"Thou sayest always something cheering to rejoice us," said the captain. "If that should happen, we should be very happy indeed."

However the Ottawa canoes were simply the vanguard to larger fleets from the interior. The Onoutchataronons and the Nipissings from the lake of that name, followed close on the fleets of the Ottawas.

Paddling incessantly during the day and during the night, along the north-east shore of Lake Huron, threading the Milky Way of islands in Georgian Bay, through French River and the linked waters that led to the headwaters of the Ottawa, making a vast circuit to the north, in the ever vain hope of out-ranging the deadly orbit of Iroquois peril, the Hurons and their fleet could not be far away.

Father Brebeuf ascended Cape Diamond and in vision he

was in a Huron canoe again, paddling behind the dark shoulders and black streaming hair of naked oarsmen whose every heartbeat counted a stroke that lifted them over the waters. That way lay peril, and thirst and hunger and insult and loneliness and privation of every sort to which death was the only release. And yet the way attracted him like a magnet. Who can fathom the mind of man and lay his finger on the hidden sources of the elemental forces that point to him the way that he must go ?

CHAPTER V

THE HURON FAIR

EARLY in August the Huron fleet from the far interior descended the long steep of Ottawa cataracts to the St. Lawrence—first a small advance flotilla of ten to twenty canoes, then a few stragglers and scouts, and then the main body. Not merely the priests and lay workers of Notre Dame des Anges, but almost the whole population of Quebec, were gathered at the water's edge and the adjoining cliffs to see the remarkable sight.

The French sailors crowded to the masts and forecastles of their ships to watch the marshalling and combined movement of that masterpiece of savage art, the birch bark canoe, which rivalled the bird in its coming and going through hundreds of leagues of forest and wherever there was a foot of water from the coast of the Vermilion Sea to the waters of the Grand Cibou. In single and double and treble file the main fleet came, an imposing array of more than a hundred and fifty canoes, propelled by the dark, glistening arms and carrying the merchandise of nearly eight hundred Hurons, every man roasted a mahogany-brown by the sun and naked except for his breech-clout and his ornaments of feathers, porcelain, shells, and claws of the eagle and the bear.

"Think how far these savages have come, my Father," said Madame Hebert, widow of the earliest settler in Quebec, to Father Le Jeune. She had left her household duties and had brought the children down from the Hebert cottage

to permit them to see the spectacle, which was greater than usual that year. "They say it takes more than a month and sometimes two months to go from here to the Mer Douce, and these savages paddle continually as long as there is a glimmer of light."

"That is true, Madame," put in Father Brebeuf, who was standing near. "It would be hard for you to exaggerate the hardships they undergo, and that with the greatest patience. The journey in favourable weather is often extended over little more than twenty days; but I have known times when it has taken three months."

"Well, they must mean business when they come all that way, and they certainly know how to work."

This last remark was from Captain de Nesle who was in his naval uniform on shore. He was master of the ship that brought Sieur de Champlain, and he was watching the Hurons who had come to land, lifting their mighty burdens of skin.

"Some are on business but many on pleasure bent, if all I hear is true," said Father Le Jeune.

"Pleasure indeed," put in Jean Nicolle, who had lived among them. He was the interpreter for Sieur de Champlain at the council of the Ottawas and spoke fluent Huron and Algonquin. "A great number of these Hurons are here only to gamble and to steal, as only a Huron can steal. The Huron has no rival as a thief among all these tribes. He could take the doublet from under your cloak without your being aware of it."

All laughed at this, for there was nobody in Quebec, who had been there in the trading season, who had not come across examples of Huron thievery.

"Well, this is the great event of the summer for the Hurons," said Father Brebeuf. "With them the summer is

the time for work and trade ; the winter is their time of festivity. In summer they fish and hunt, and their women cultivate the soil, while the traders go forth to sell for European and other wares the tobacco they have received from the Tiononattates south of them and the furs from the Algonquins north of them in exchange for the barley, wheat, pumpkins, and maize of their fields."

"So that when our Algonquins here are working the Hurons are playing, and when the Montagnais hunt the beaver and the moose the Huron is having his period of festivity?" This query came from Captain de Nesle.

"Yes, that is very much how it is, though not completely so," answered Father de Brebeuf. "There is not a great deal of winter game in the Huron country, and the moose and buffalo are rare. They have perforce to live on what they can produce from the land and catch in summer, and they are more settled and provident than the Algonquins."

"Well, they are keen traders and they want a lot for what they give," put in Nicolle, who was an agent for the fur company.

"And they are entitled to all they get," commented Brebeuf. "Their riches are really only poverty, and they can be happy on very little."

There was ritual and routine and earnest purpose in this visit of the savages, a round trip of almost three hundred leagues, every knot of which was covered by the wear and tear of human sinew and at the perpetual risk of death by accident or disease or the tomahawk of an Iroquois ambuscade.

On the day of their arrival they would land on the Quebec strand and erect their dwellings of bark. On the second day they would hold their councils and exchange their presents. During the third and fourth days they would barter their

furs and tobacco for blankets, hatchets, kettles, mantles, iron arrow-heads, shirts, and glass beads. When the fair was over they would take one more day for their last councils, for sightseeing, for the banquet and feast of rhetoric which were generally prepared for them, and for dancing and entertainment ; and then early on the morning of the sixth day, often according to the hour of the incoming tide, they would disappear up the St. Lawrence like a flight of birds.

The Fathers were eager to gaze their full on these visitors from the realms of the setting sun, for on them the hopes of the Jesuit mission in America rested most of all. They watched them as they built their temporary quarters and jostled each other under the cliffs of Quebec in their variety of savage costumes, some in bear skins, others in beaver, and others in elk skins, nearly all men of splendid, well-moulded figures, tall, powerful, able bodied, and withal good natured. Father Le Jeune could not help expressing his admiration.

"There is no trace of effeminacy here," he exclaimed to Madame Hebert.

"Indeed there is not," answered that lady. "What figures, what grace, what agility and strength !" she remarked with sparkling eyes ; and then she blushed at the disclosure of her own enthusiasm, which was nothing to the disclosures made by the savages.

"The little fops that we see in Paris," commented the priest, "are mere caricatures compared with these children of nature. I was inclined to believe heretofore that those pictures in Europe of the Roman emperors represented men who never existed and merely the ideal of the artists responsible for them ; but I behold here on the shoulders of these bronzed Huron warriors the heads of Cæsar, of Pompey, of

Augustus, of Otho, equal in every way to the heads I have seen in France on statues, on reliefs and on medallions."

"And yet they remain poor, degraded savages," remarked Madame Hebert sadly.

"Indeed," answered the Jesuit, "sorrow fills my heart as I look at them. For their souls seem to cry for help in one's ear, uttering the word of the Macedonian to St. Paul, 'Come, help us, bring into our country the torch that has never yet illuminated it.'"

The next day the Hurons met in council, and as one of the chief matters to be considered was the taking of action concerning the Jesuits destined for their country, Father Le Jeune and Father Brebeuf went to see them. They found the sachems gathered with Louys Amantacha in their midst, a young Huron who had been brought to France by the Recollets to be educated, and who had, after some years spent at college there, returned to his own country.

Le Jeune had here a better opportunity of observing the bizarre manner of wearing their hair, which had given the Hurons their name of the "wild boars." Some wore the lank, black hair long and hanging over on one side as women wore it, and short and tied up on the other. Some wore it shaved or cropped at the very spot where others wore a long war-lock. Some had a large strip, closely shaven, extending across the head lengthwise, passing from the back of the crown to the middle of the forehead. Others, on the contrary, wore a queue which stood out like tufted plumage, the crested panache of a casque, or the bristling comb of an angry rooster.

Nearly all wore trinkets in their hair and pendants in their ears. All were painted for the council on their bodies as well as on their faces, some with black rings around their eyes, and parallel lines of red ochre on their faces, and

almost every chest wore the configuration of a breastplate charcoaled or tattooed.

Louys Amantacha, who had come down with the fleet and who still spoke fluent French, declared there was much satisfaction among his people over the prospect of the return of the black robes.

"I am trying to find someone who will take them in his canoe," he said, "or rather I ought to say to choose someone, for a great number have offered themselves to Father Brebeuf. I myself want to take one with me."

"Then all is going well?" asked Le Jeune.

"Very well," was the answer. "We are all highly pleased over the return of the French. We want as many of the Fathers as you can spare. Three is much too small a figure. We have twenty-five towns with as many thousand people as that, and three will not be able to go very far."

Meanwhile the council assembled with Sieur de Champlain presiding. Le Jeune as he entered the aboriginal senate could not but recall the picture of Louis XI meeting his parliament in the midst of a bare meadow with a fallen tree for his throne. The Huron senators were seated lower still—flat on the earth in fact, with only the regard to precedence that seated one village next to another. Marked gravity characterized the demeanour of the deputies, who numbered perhaps sixty, not counting the young men who sat as audience. After some preliminaries Aenons, a sagamore well known to Father Brebeuf, began his harangue.

"Great Captain of the French," he said, addressing Sieur de Champlain, "the Huron people here assembled, including all the four nations, the Attignaouentans, or the Nation of the Bear, the Attignenonaghac, or the Nation of the Cord, the Arendarrhonons, or the Nation of the Rock, and the Ataronchronons, greet you. We have come down the river

of the Ottawas for the purpose of holding a council with our friends and brothers, the French, and to strengthen the friendship and alliance between them."

As he said this there arose a deep chorus of ejaculations from the rest of the savages. "Ho! ho! ho! ho! ho!" they all interjected, drawing the aspirations from the depths of their stomachs, the last syllable raised very high.

The sagamore then declared that as an outward and visible testimony of their sentiments he desired to offer presents to the great captain of the French; and thereupon he presented three packages of beaver skins.

"All our people," he continued, "are rejoiced at the return of *Sieur de Champlain* and we have come to warm ourselves at his fire. The fuel we bring to the fire are three more packages of beaver skins, which we offer to him as a present." And then the three extra packages were presented.

Then *Sieur de Champlain* spoke.

"My friends and brothers of the Huron nation," he said. "You know that I have always loved you, and that I have wished very much to have you as brothers. Now I have been sent back by the great king of the French to protect you, and this I do very willingly. We sent a bark and shallop to meet you, and the Iroquois who were in waiting for you and us treacherously killed three of our men; but we have not lost heart on that account. The French fear nothing and they cherish their friends very dearly. Do not believe those who want to divert you from coming to see the French, for having given you our word, we will keep it, as we have been able to keep it in the past. I still recognize old men among your people with whom I went to war against the Iroquois in former years. They are the pledge of our continuing friendship with you. I thank you most heartily for your presents, which the French will know very well how to requite."

The Governor then spoke of the missionary Fathers, who were preparing to go and live with them in their own country as an evidence of the affection which the French bore the Hurons.

"These are our Fathers," he said, turning and opening his arms in the direction of Father Brebeuf, Father Daniel and Father Davost, who, black clad and silent, stood in the vicinity of the commandant. "We love them more than our children or ourselves; they are held in very high esteem in France; it is neither hunger nor want that brings them to this country; they do not come to see you for your property or your fur. Here is Louys Amantacha of your tribe who knows them and who knows very well that I speak the truth. If you love the French people as you say you do, then love these Fathers. Honour them and they will teach you the way to heaven. This is what makes them leave their country, their friends, their comforts, to instruct you, and especially to teach your children a knowledge so great and necessary."

Two of the savage chiefs responded, vying with each other in honouring Sieur de Champlain and the French, and testifying their affection.

"When the French are absent," declared Onadaana, a swarthy sagamore whose black hair bristled upward like the hedge on the back of a hyena, and with a gorgeous wampum belt round his middle, "the earth is no longer the earth, the river is no longer the river, and the sky is no longer the sky. But upon the return of Sieur de Champlain everything has become as before; the earth is again the earth, greener and brighter than ever; the river is again the river, more smooth and more alive with fish; and the sky is again the sky, beaming over us and shedding rain on our crops."

The second of the two orators, Cundigasto, an old man with white hair and powerful aquiline features, was equally

enthusiastic over the return of the great warrior, whose repute had spread even to the Pottawattomies and the Nadouessi beyond the great waters.

"We of the four nations," he said, "are apprehensive and timid. We look around us in fear, not knowing whether danger is near us or far away. But the French walk the earth like great captains. Sieur de Champlain is terror-inspiring in his looks, and when he is in battle a glance from his eye strikes consternation in his enemies."

Then apostrophizing the youth of the tribe, Cundigasto went on :

"Now, you young men, pay careful attention to what is here being said. Have regard to the words you have heard from the mouth of the great captain of the French. Do not say we have not talked all this over in council. I warn you now in order that you shall know how to obey."

Then Father Brebeuf with a few words in the speech of the Hurons brought the council to an end.

"We are going with you to live and die in your country," he said. "We will be your brothers and hereafter we will be of your people. If our Fathers do not make their dwelling in every one of your villages, it will not be because they do not love all the tribes equally well, but because, being so few, they cannot live in so many different places at once. The time is not distant when others of our brothers will come to aid us, and then one of us will live in each one of your villages and teach you to be happy for ever."

Then Louys Amantacha confirmed all that had been said, whilst the natives evinced their satisfaction by their profound aspirations : "Ho ! ho ! Haaw ! Haaw ! Ham ! Ham !" They then surrounded Father Brebeuf, competing with each other in great good humour for the honour of carrying him each in his canoe. Others crossed over and caressed the hands

of Father Le Jeune, looking at him and at Father Brebeuf and saying :

“ See how like each other they are. Surely they are brothers.”

Very agreeable to the Fathers was this renewed contact with the Hurons. They left the council, mindful of the waywardness of the savage, but full of hope.

CHAPTER VI

THE ONE-EYED DISTURBER

MEANWHILE the savage merchants from Toanché, the seaboard town of the Huron Nation of the Bear in which the Jesuits had formerly lived, were urging Father Brebeuf to make his home with them again.

"Open thy heart to us, Echon, conceal nothing," said Tsiouendaentaha, one of the chief men. "Where dost thou wish to live in our country? Dost thou wish to live in our cabins or is it thy desire to have one apart?"

"I wish to have a separate dwelling," said the Father.

"That is well," was the reply. "We will go and build our cabins around thee in our new village. We separated and broke up the village of Toanché on the death of the Frenchman, Etienne Brulé, who was killed in our country. Everyone went away, some here, and some there."

"Where did most of you go?" asked the Father.

"Most of the people of Toanché, which town they burnt, went to Ihonatiria, a league or two away, for they no longer desired to remain at Toanché, fearing the vengeance of the French."

"It is true that it is the French custom to punish murderers," said Brebeuf, "and not merely to seek reparation as you do. But this murder is now some years distant, and there appears no way of finding the guilty individuals."

"We feared the French would not receive us well on that account," said Tsiouendaentaha, "but now all is well. We

fear the great captain no longer. But we greatly desire that thou wilt return with us, so that thou mayest defend us ; for what can we do without thee ? ”

When towards evening Father Brebeuf went to the fort where the Hurons were assembled to arrange with what canoes to embark, he was at once accosted by Arontana, a leading chieftain of Ossossane, the metropolis and most populous town of the Nation of the Bear. Arontana at once unloosed all his batteries of persuasion, seeking to induce the Father to make his residence in his town.

“ Echon,” he said, “ we desire thee to come with us. We will carry thee and all thy brothers with us in our canoes. Only say the word and we will do thy will.”

“ I would greatly desire to go with thee, Arontana,” answered the Father. “ However I shall have to wait a little before I know. The decision has not yet been made.”

“ The people of Ihonatiria are claiming that thou hast decided to go with them,” returned the chief. “ But why wilt thou choose to live in a hamlet when thou couldst as easily live where there are more to hear thy word ? Ossossane is the largest of the towns in the Nation of the Bear.”

“ That is true, and thy reasoning is good, Arontana. I shall be able to answer thee better when we have had a little time to take counsel.”

“ That is well,” said Arontana. “ Consider also that thou wilt be safe with our people. No one will steal from thee. I hold the entire country on my shoulders. I shall protect thee. We all love thee. Thou wilt want for nothing, for our country is the best among the Hurons.”

To this the Father made no answer, merely looking at the chieftain, and reflecting on the wisest course the while.

“ I see clearly,” said Arontana, with the usual savage shrewdness, “ that thou hast fear of offending the people of

the village of Toanché where thou hast lived before, and who wish to have thee. But thou knowest well that thou art the master of thine own actions. Thou requirest merely to say to them that thou wilt come to us, and they will say nothing more to thee."

Fathers Brebeuf, Daniel and Davost, being destined for the Huron country, slept in the storehouse close to the shore that night, and Fathers Le Jeune and de Noue put up for the night with them that they might see them off early the next morning. Everybody was composing himself to rest, when, near midnight, the raucous voice of the one-eyed savage chief, called "Le Borgne" by the French, belonging to the Algonquins on the Allumette Islands, by which the Hurons had to pass on their way to and from Quebec, broke the stillness of the night. The Island savage was striding between the cabins of the Hurons counselling them in the tones of the public crier that they should beware of taking any French in their homeward canoes.

"The people of the Petite Nation are greatly incensed at the incarceration by the French of a warrior of their tribe," he proclaimed. "They will watch along the river to kill the Frenchmen should they take passage. Due warning is given to everybody."

On the preceding Sunday Indians belonging to the tribe of the prisoner held for murder by Champlain had called a council, which Hurons, Montagnais and the Island savages attended, to determine how they might secure the release of the prisoner. The Hurons had been besought to ask for it, but they refused; and so this Island savage, whose tribe was related to the nation of the prisoner, had raised this general cry in the midst of the cabins. The Fathers could hear the harangue going on outside, and its import having become clear to them, Fathers Le Jeune and de Noue went to

consult Sieur de Champlain at the fort, and having made known the reason of their nocturnal visit, returned to the storehouse, which was their temporary dwelling.

On their way back the Fathers found the Huron sagamores again in council and greatly disturbed by the turn of affairs. For they were greatly dependent on the good will of the Island tribes, who in fact levied toll on travellers who passed their portages. Nor did their conviction that the real purpose of the Island tribes was to interrupt intercourse between the Hurons and the French and thus bring a monopoly and large profit to the Islanders as middlemen for the goods of both make things any easier. In any case a request went to the Hurons from Sieur de Champlain to the effect that they delay their departure for a further taking of counsel with him. Consequently early the next morning a public crier went between the camps proclaiming to the Huron merchants that they were not to depart that day.

"The captains advise that the fleet shall not take leave today," was the message the Hurons heard as the dawn found them still lying round their log fires. "The young men are advised to keep the peace; traders who have not sold all their tobacco and furs will have a further opportunity of doing so. The Governor of the French will hold a new council with the captains of the Hurons."

At eight o'clock the French commander descended from his residence in the fort to the shore and in the presence of the chiefs of the Hurons and the Montagnais there assembled questioned the Island savage who had made the outcry.

"Why hast thou aroused this opposition?" he asked the one-eyed disturber.

"Because the whole country is alarmed," was the answer of the Algonquin chief, who remained quite unabashed. "Moreover it will be lost if any Frenchmen are taken along

with the Hurons, for the relatives of the prisoner in the fort will certainly attempt to kill some of the party, and a general war may well result."

The savage then added as he observed the frown on Champlain's brow: "I have merely revealed the wicked designs of the prisoner's relatives. If the prisoner is released the trouble will be ended."

At this point Champlain, observing the captains of the Hurons looking grave and troubled, addressed them.

"My brothers," he said, "do you still adhere to your wish to take the Frenchmen to your country?"

To this the Hurons made no immediate answer. A group of the Old Men talked for a few minutes in low tones, and then Tsiousendaentaha, captain of the town of Ihonatiria, formerly Toanché, in the Nation of the Bear, made an ambiguous reply.

"Certainly," he said, "we desire very much to take the Frenchmen back to our country, if it could be done without danger. But we see no way of doing it if the people of the Petite Nation are to make trouble for us. The river is not ours and great caution will have to be observed, if we are to pass in security."

Sieur de Champlain, in the face of the sudden turn of affairs, did all in his power to facilitate the departure of the Fathers. He appealed to the reason of the Indians; he used threats; he proposed peace or war. But to all his expostulations the savages merely answered that they could not restrain their young men; that warning had been given of the wicked intentions of the Petite Nation; and that the French ought to postpone their departure for that season.

And this was the general decision that came out of the consultation. The Fathers decided that it would be foolhardy to undertake the journey and that their doing so

might well involve the French in war with all these people. Thus the hope of going to the Huron country was lost to Brebeuf and his companions for that season ; but it gave the Fathers opportunity for a better preparation, and, as the Hurons phrased it in the expression of their regret on leaving, the intervening months would soon pass away.

CHAPTER VII

CLIMBING THE OTTAWA

IN the following July Father Brebeuf, Father Daniel and Father Davost, with a number of attending Frenchmen, were enabled to leave Quebec for the Huron country.

Very few canoes had descended the Ottawa River that summer, for fear again haunted the entire Huron confederacy. The Iroquois in the spring had dealt the four nations another stunning blow. Having been informed by their spies that five hundred Hurons were moving to make war upon them, the Iroquois themselves formed an expedition to the number of fifteen hundred, and having surprised those who were to surprise them, killed two hundred of them and took two hundred prisoners, most of whom they burnt. The dread of a second invasion and of an ambuscade on the way prevented the Hurons from descending to the trading posts of the St. Lawrence in any but small bands.

A small crowd gathered to bid the Fathers adieu, for the very bark that bore Brebeuf and Daniel from Quebec had ascended to form a new settlement at Three Rivers. The general of the French fleet gave presents to the savages and was their host at a great feast of three kettles. The general honoured the canoes that bore the Fathers away with several volleys.

Brebeuf had explained to the accompanying Frenchmen what was before them. The journey lay over a route three hundred leagues long that was a continuous ascent abounding in rapids and cataracts. There was a less roundabout way

up the St. Lawrence and across the waters of Lake Ontario, but there on the southern banks lurked the tiger-hearted Iroquois, an enemy more feared by Huron and Algonquin than all the whirlpools, cascades and cataclysms in the world.

It was to give these implacable bullies of the wilderness the widest possible berth that Hurons and Nipissings and Ottawas and Algonquins were willing to make this wide circuit to and from Quebec, the Hurons, when leaving their own country, first ascending the Mer Douce or Lake Huron to the west and north and then passing through the waters of the Nipissing and its streams till they reached the tumbling Ottawa floods.

Brebeuf had covered the route twice before, in going to and coming from the Hurons, but on this third journey he found the fatigues, the losses and the expenses heavier than on any other. The Fathers, owing to the small number of canoes and their hurried departure, had to leave behind almost all their baggage and most of the necessities of life, and owing to sickness among the savages they had to paddle all the way and to carry their packages at the portages, things they had never done before. The malady that afflicted the savage boatmen made their temper uncertain. A word, a dream, a fancy, or a small sense of inconvenience, Brebeuf was well aware, would be enough to cause them to illtreat or set ashore or even murder any Frenchman carried by them, so that the Frenchmen had to watch their companions warily.

The canoes of Brebeuf and Daniel kept fairly close together over about half the journey; the priests usually slept under the summer sky at night on the same rock and they were able occasionally to converse while on the water. Their experiences were similar.

Barefooted, lest their hard shoes might injure the frail craft, each crouched and paddled with unpractised hands, day after day, week after week, before sunrise and after sunset, in the hot sun and with the storm beating down, under the stars and under the vast curtain of the primitive forest, the same naked, tawny shoulders working and bending rhythmically in front, the same partly shaved head and ridge of black warlocks dancing with each stroke, the same powerful arms coming and going with machine-like regularity, the same stench of tired-out savages infecting the air, the same long wearisome silence for lack of practice in the savage tongue. At the rate of ten leagues a day or more a propitious journey might be completed in a month. Unpropitiously the journey might last three months, if the voyager did not find his sepulchre on the way.

Brebeuf knew his Hurons and had repeatedly advised the Fathers and other Frenchmen, appointed for work among them, how to act towards their companions on the voyage.

To conciliate the savages he was careful never after a halt to make them wait for him in embarking. He had provided himself with a tinder box and burning glass, and with these he furnished fire in the daytime to light their pipes and in the evening when they had to encamp. He tried to eat their sagamité in the way they prepared it, dirty, half-cooked and tasteless as it was ; and the numerous other unpleasant things encountered he made a practice of not appearing to notice. He found it best to take everything they offered, even though he was not able to eat it all at the time, for he soon found it was not too much.

He took good care to be prompt in embarking and disembarking, tucking up his gown so that it would not carry water or sand into the canoe. He provided himself with some awls, pocket-knives, fishhooks and beads of coloured

glass, with which to buy fish and other things when the tribes met each other to feast. He had counselled Father Daniel and Father Davost to act in this way in so far as they could do so.

"You are," he advised them, "now in the midst of a barbarous people who have very little regard for your philosophy and theology. All the fine traits that made you admired and loved in France are here simply pearls trampled under the feet of swine, or rather mules, which lose all respect for you when they see you are not pack-mules with backs as capable as their own. If it were in your power to walk around naked and carry the load of a horse on your back as they do, then you would be somebody worth while in accordance with their standards. But not being able to do those things you must put up with their contempt as best you may."

Brebeuf began to paddle very willingly, though the Huron boatmen had been paid alike for his fare and for their work at the portages. His strength and activity as oarsman were soon observed to be no greater than his unfailing patience and good nature, and they had not been long out of Three Rivers before his companions were showing much affection towards him.

"It is a great pity, my brother," said Sondaarou, master of the canoe, who paddled in front of him, as the boatmen rested a moment or two, "that thou art a long robe and not a warrior like unto the great Governor, thy brother. For with the tomahawk in thy hand thou wouldst strike dread into the Iroquois our enemies, who have now begun so grievously to afflict us."

At this there was an amiable grunt of assent from the other dusky paddlers. "Ho! ho! Ham! Ham! Haaw! Haaw!" came the deep-chested ejaculations.

Brebeuf smiled, and then grew serious again.

"Warrior am I not," he replied, "according to the world and the flesh. But in another sense I and my brothers are enrolled in an everlasting war; and we carry with us weapons infinitely more powerful than the weak tomahawk of which thou speakest, and against which all the powers of darkness cannot prevail. These weapons I and our Fathers will use in combating ignorance and heathendom in thy country."

"That is well," replied Sondaarou, who was a sagamore among his people. "We shall welcome thee, for we believe that thou and the other long robes intend us well. But why dost thou not use these weapons against the Iroquois who are so much more in need of them than we and who are the oppressors of all these neighbouring nations?"

"It is our hope so to use them. We shall go to the Iroquois even as to you. We shall fight their superstition and their idolatry, not with the tomahawk, the arquebus and the bow and arrow, but with the weapons of the spirit."

"But the pity is that the Iroquois will not wait for you to go to them," answered Sondaarou. "They will come to you and to us, and what avail then will be the invisible weapons of which you speak? The Iroquois respect only weapons superior to theirs in the fight—the iron-pointed arrow, the matchlock with its fire and thunder, and the iron hatchet and javelin with the strong arm behind them."

"Nevertheless it must needs be that they must eventually succumb to the weapons of which I speak," was the Father's answer. "There may be still, as there has been before, a long prelude of tribulation, but the illumination concerning Him who made all will spread alike to the Iroquois and to all the neighbouring nations. That is why we, whom you call the black robes, have been willing to leave our own

land and come among you. It is our hope that the Huron nation, with its populous, stable and sedentary communities, will be the centre of a great light that will spread its rays among all the neighbouring nations."

To this Sondaarou did not answer. He liked the tribute to his nation, but the Indians were materialists from the crown of their heads to the soles of their feet. To eat, to have many women, and to make war on their enemies occupied their lives. Outside those occupations, hardly anything interested them. This was the only life they knew, and when the missionaries began to talk of the other world and of the life to come and of other things outside the range of their five senses, they began to lose interest.

"We do not know concerning these things. When thou speakest our language better, we will begin better to understand thee," they would say, or they would say nothing at all.

Brebeuf employed the silence of the way to observe the country, everywhere unending pines and spruces and white cedars, everywhere a deep carpet of undergrowth and the banks glorious with an infinitude of wild flowers.

They had made great progress after leaving Three Rivers, and sending their little vessel over Lac St. Pierre like a swallow they were soon opposite the site of Ville Marie and Mont Royal. Brebeuf, like Champlain before him, took note of the three rivers falling into Lac St. Louis, the Grand River of the Ottawas, the St. Lawrence descending from the Huron tableland and basins, and the Chateaugay, coming north from the uplands of the Iroquois.

They spent the night on one of the small islands above the Lachine Rapids. Then the tranquil waters of Lac de Soissons, with its twin mountains, was reached. The vast expanse of water, flowing majestically between primordial

rocks, appeared to Brebeuf foreshadowings of the immensity of the world to come. The savages had already drawn his attention to the tawny waters from the river of the Ottawas running side by side with the bright, clear water of the St. Lawrence in the same bed.

The savages dreaded the Long Sault, the four leagues of turbulent rapids with the primitive forest so dense that they could not carry their canoes by land and had to drag them upstream by ropes. But they went through the enormous labour successfully as they had to go through numerous similar labours and perils. As they ascended the stream, forests enormously high rose out of the water and closed them in. Occasionally the tired imagination of Brebeuf would endow with life the giant rocks sculptured by wind and rain to weird and rounded shapes. As the evening descended he would behold a tropical lion hunt on the backs of elephants, or a great city with towers and minarets innumerable, intersected with mysterious thoroughfares, or a war of mastodons, or fleets of sailing vessels grappling in war.

Often they came on stretches of water alive with salmon. They saw islands, consisting of meadows and white cedars where game abounded. The chirping of myriad birds would greet them at sunrise. Owls hooted at them, the whippoorwill called, and the loon chilled their ears with his maniac laughter at night.

Brebeuf often forgot his fatigue in his rapture over the panorama of beauty that encompassed him. Paddling up a broad, black river to a mysterious destination, the hills clothed with firs and jack pines and scarlet oaks to a dizzy height, the white waters crested by the encumbrances of rock and pebble in its bed, so intimate with forest and hills that it appeared to issue from both, with plovers, woodcocks and snipe calling and winging their way across the canoe

from one glade to another, the Jesuit was often tempted to wish that the journey might be unduly prolonged, so intimate appeared the association of heaven and earth.

Brebeuf, like Champlain before him, had to admire the dexterity of the savages in negotiating the rapids, avoiding the whirlpools and breakers, white as snowdrifts in their foaming, and steering into the easier side channels. Their prudence was inferior to their skill, however, for at night, unlike Champlain, they set up no barricades and placed no sentinels, even at portages infested by Iroquois as in Champlain's day.

Near Allumette Islands, resting at the edge of a wood, one evening during a halt, where he could see the village of bark cabins, Brebeuf was startled to hear a loud voice speaking oratorically in a savage accent unknown to him. Looking round he saw some brilliant colouring in a clearing not far away, which turned out in the dusk to be a tall figure more richly clothed than any savage potentate he had ever before seen.

The vanity of the savage ran to rich robes of muskrat and skunk, marvellously coiffred headdress, and painted war clubs. But here was oriental magnificence, radiant with silks and satins, a chief carrying himself with the port of an Asiatic monarch, majestic in step and bearing, uttering unknown words in a commanding voice and with authoritative gestures, as if addressing a royal court.

Brebeuf strained his eyes to get a glimpse of the unseen audience, and sought to get nearer the enigmatic personage. He saw the imposing figure walking to and fro like an orator on the stage. He saw him raise his arms aloft and bring them together again. He heard the powerful voice accompanied with the broad, sweeping gestures. At last he caught some of the words. The royal personage was speaking

fluent Algonquin with all the wealth of verbal imagery dear to native speech. But the audience remained totally invisible.

Suddenly the majestic figure began to stride towards the spot where Brebeuf stood concealed by the brushwood, still uttering in a loud voice words that were manifestly of high import. Then Brebeuf was startled to see fire issuing from the hands of the personage and to hear his words punctuated by loud reports resembling the crack of pistols. A moment later the Jesuit had recognized the countenance as that of Jean Nicollet the interpreter, whom he had last seen at Quebec and Three Rivers two weeks before, when Champlain had commissioned him to find the gate to the East. He at once went forward.

"Well, well, Monsieur Nicollet," he said. "Who would have recognized you? Why all this magnificence, and where was the audience you were addressing?"

At this Nicollet, recognizing Father Brebeuf, laughed heartily.

"You will have to go a long way to find the audience, Father Brebeuf," he said. "It dwells on the other side of the great water and the fresh water seas where you are going to stop. I was merely practising the sort of speech I intend to deliver when I come to those people related to the Chinese and the East Indians that I expect on this journey to meet."

"Your clothes will certainly speak very loudly to them," said the Father, smiling.

"Rather magnificent, are they not?" remarked the interpreter. "The idea of the clothes is my own, though it was Sieur de Champlain who conceived the idea of the journey. You know the Chinese dress something after this manner."

"Well, they will get the very latest from Paris. And you

are to show them that we have gunpowder as well as they. I am sure you will get a great reception."

At the Allumette Islands Father Brebeuf lost touch with Father Daniel. He was alone with the savages when they burnt their tobacco to the spirits who ruled the swirling waters of the Chaudière, the thunder of which he had heard a couple of leagues before they reached it. He reached the Huron country early in August after a journey of twenty days, of which one was a day of rest by the waters of the Nipissing, which was very good going.

He counted thirty-five portages, where the canoes and their burdens had to be lifted from the water and carried on the backs of the voyageurs around cataracts and rapids often two or three leagues distant, over which three or four trips had to be made in water, in mud, and in the obscurity and entanglement of the forest. More than fifty times they were compelled to wade through raging, unnavigable currents, propelling their canoes or dragging them with ropes, sometimes with water to their necks.

To the extreme toil, begun early and ending late, extreme hunger was to be added. On their way down it was the custom of the Hurons every two days to plant caches of maize in the woods to eat on their return. If these hiding places, which were the only hotels in the country, were robbed or missed, as often happened, they had to go without eating. The fare at the best was not sumptuous. In the morning and at night they mixed the meal with water and each ate a bowlful ; and on the strength of this they paddled all day.

On the shore of Lake Huron and the Nottawasaga waters Brebeuf was abandoned by his savage companions. He thereupon hid his packages in the forest and went searching for the new village of Ihonatiria. He passed the spot where Etienne Brulé had been murdered and the site of the ruined

Toanché, where he had lived three years, and towards night-fall he found Ihonatiria some leagues deeper in the country. He was recognized as soon as his tall form appeared at the village entrance, and the news of his arrival quickly spread. "Echon is come again," was the good news, and the savages came running out of their cabins.

"Echon, is it really thou?" "Echon, I am most happy to see thee." "And so, Echon, thou hast come back? That is good indeed. Now the crops will ripen and we will have much rain from the sky." Such were the greetings which the black robe received.

He was at once invited to make his dwelling in the cabin of Awandawa, the richest merchant in the village, and there the Father awaited the arrival of the other Frenchmen. They came one by one over a period of weeks, all wearied and worn, each with his tale of horror, but full of thanks at finding his feet in a land which each at times had given up hope of ever seeing. Rest and care gradually brought them to normal health and strength again.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MISSION HOUSE AT IHONATIRIA

IN the cabin of Awandawa, around one of the pine-knot fires and its bubbling kettles, in the thick smoke, and interrupted by the cries of savage children and the shrill chiding of squaws, Brebeuf, Daniel and Davost talked and took counsel.

"I find it hard to believe that we are where we are," remarked Father Daniel one night, when the ouragans had been emptied of their sagamité and the pipes had been handed round. "Just think of it ; here we are in an unknown land, in the midst of a people whose inner minds are even more *terra incognita* to us than the land itself. I live all the time in a dream and ask myself if we are living on another planet rather than on the earth we know."

Father Daniel was a young priest, barely a year from the college of Eu, when he came to Quebec, and he was still full of the wonder of his surroundings. His eyes had been roaming over the interior of the cabin in which he and his companions sat at one end, the train of fires painting light and shadow on the concave of roof and its patch of sky ; the copper-coloured circles eating, smoking, gambling, haranguing, planing shields and pointing arrows ; trinket-laden damsels bantering dark-browed youths beyond the circle of light ; squaws, ranging from youth to age, still voluptuous and delicately moulded after a youth of wantonness, or haggard as aged pack-mules, waiting on their lords, making

twine from hemp by rolling it on their thighs, or hanging the golden ears of unshelled corn to the perches under the roof.

The Fathers had been exchanging the small coin of conversation with their host and his family, and, wearied with the effort at elementary Huron speech, had fallen to talking among themselves.

"We might think we were on another planet when we look around us," said Father Davost, interpreting the thought of his companion.

He was still worn and dejected over the experiences of his journey from Quebec in which he had suffered more than anyone. "We have put between us and Quebec three hundred leagues of forest wilderness and countless terrible cataracts and rivers, and more than a thousand leagues between us and France. And we are living among a people who have been separated from Europe and its civilization from the birth of the world. The planets could not be much more different from France than this land."

"All this brings us so much nearer that other world which is the destination of us all," came the composed voice of Brebeuf. "The country and the people will grow on you as they have grown on us who have been here before; and you will soon begin to think that the nature of the savage is not very different from the nature of the French. You will in time begin to marvel, not so much at the differences as at the uniformity of human nature among the sons of Adam. You must have already observed that the passions and the instincts of the savages are normally not much different from ours."

"That is true," said Father Daniel. "It has been one of the wonders that the journey to this country has revealed to me. There are times when I imagine I am in my French

circle at home. There are other times when I feel I am at the centre of the earth, dungeoned amid impenetrable gloom, or on top of the world, as we are, in a forest empire where Satan has wielded absolute rule perpetually and where we are regarded as interlopers in his realm."

It was still a question with the Fathers whether they would decide to make their permanent residence at Ihonatoria, where they were, or at Ossossane, which Father Brebeuf also knew very well, and which was more populous than that small village, being indeed the capital of the Nation of the Bear.

"Have you come to any decision yet, Father Brebeuf, as to where we shall settle down?" asked Father Daniel.

"I think so," answered the Superior. "When I made my journey to Teanaustaye on the frontier the other week to see Louys Amantacha and his family I talked the matter over with him, and it was the chief subject of my thoughts in going and returning."

"Then we shall remain here?"

"It appears the wiser plan. Of course we would have a larger number of listeners at Ossossane, and there are many there eager to have us, as well as at Wenrio. But I think we had better make our beginning where we are. We can keep in the shadow here at Ihonatoria, where the people are accustomed to the sight of our robes and to our way of living. Then later we can venture more into the light."

"Yes," answered Father Daniel, "it is well that the Hurons should be permitted to grow gradually accustomed to us. The savage is not the simple creature I imagined him to be. He is an inveterate scoffer. To the Hurons our appearance is as grotesque as theirs is to us."

"The deeper you go into the country the more you will find that to be the case," said Father Brebeuf. "They are

full of arrogance and they imagine themselves to be the greatest men on earth. The fact that we do not carry arms and do not engage in war is apt at first to give them a low opinion of us and to render us almost incomprehensible. They are at a loss to understand our motives and why we are here."

"We can explain everything when we master their language."

"That is our only hope," said the Superior. "It is the first task on which we must engage. Until we master the language we will be without influence, and the poor attempts of new and inexperienced men to talk to them would merely excite ridicule among a numerous youth. That is why we must remain here for a time. With a mastery of the language we can hold our own in all the Huron towns."

And so the Fathers decided to make Ihonatiria, hamlet though it was, the first centre of their activities, and they came to this determination the more readily because it was the port of reception on the voyage from Quebec and had facilities for fishing and game. Father Brebeuf conveyed his decision to the elders among the savages, who gave expression to their satisfaction and promised that they would at once gather the young men and build a large cabin in which all the French could live together. The work was soon begun; and though there was much dawdling, by the beginning of October, with the help of the people of Wenrio, a near-by town, who wanted to participate in the building, the cabin was made ready.

In its exterior the new mission house was not greatly different from any other Huron cabin. It was thirty-six feet long and twenty feet wide, and in shape much like the arbours overarching a garden walk. The frame was of strong saplings, planted in two rows to form the sides, and lashed together

by withes and other saplings at the top. The whole was then covered by sheets of cedar bark, overlapping like the shingles of a roof, and secured by cords of linden bark. The interior however was something the like of which had never been seen in the land of the Hurons. Here the Fathers arranged things to suit themselves, and it was not long before the house became a place of wonder to everybody in the confederacy.

The missionaries divided the interior by partitions into three parts. The compartment nearest the main entrance was arranged to serve as anteroom, storm door, and storeroom for pumpkins, corn, smoked fish, and other edibles, not easily injured by the frost. The room at the other end was the chapel and here they erected their altar and kept their images, pictures, vestments, sacramental wine, and sacred vessels. The second and central room, the largest of the three, was arranged to serve as living room, kitchen, carpenter's shop, mill, refectory, and bedroom. Here on both sides, after the manner of the Hurons, ran broad platforms, four feet above the floor, bearing chests for clothes and tools, and serving as cover for the sleeping bunks and hiding places for things that might tempt the Huron passion for thievery.

For mattresses and pillows there were spruce boughs and bark covered by rush mats; and for sheets and coverlets skins of the moose or bear or the day blanket did duty. The fireplace was a ring of stones in the centre. A stool or two, and a couple of tables, made on the spot by the French donnés, a handmill, a clock, and an Indian mortar for pounding corn, were the chief articles of furniture.

The mission house soon became a Mecca to the savages of Ihonatoria, Wenrio, Anonatea, Onentisati, and all the other neighbouring towns, who came in a continuous procession

to see it and never tired of exclaiming at its marvels. The carpentered door, swinging on its iron hinges, was the first thing to strike their admiration, for the Hurons, like the Algonquins, were familiar with nothing better than the curtain of skin or sheet of bark that covered the entrances to their own huts.

The hand mill and the clock filled the visitors with astonishment. Everybody who entered wanted to turn the mill ; and as to the clock, the savages had a thousand things to say of it. In their eyes it was a thing of life, for they could not imagine how it sounded of itself. When it was going to strike the Indians would watch to see if the Frenchmen were all in view and that nobody had hidden himself in order to shake it.

They thought the clock had ears, for some of the Frenchmen as a joke would call out " That's enough " at the last stroke of the hammer, and they thought that it obeyed them. They gave it the name of the " Captain of the Day." When it struck they said it was speaking ; and they would ask, when they came to look at it, how many times the Captain had spoken. They would ask about its food and would often remain hours to hear it speak.

They used to ask what it said, and the Frenchmen told them two things which they remembered and obeyed ; one, that when it sounded four o'clock in the afternoon, during winter, it was saying : " Go away, that we may close the door " ; and that at midday, when it struck twelve times, it said : " Come, put on the kettle," and this latter speech was the best remembered of all, for there never failed to be present at that hour a goodly crowd to get a share of *sagamité*.

Sondaarou, master of the canoe that brought Father Brebeuf from Three Rivers, and the other savages were also

greatly interested in a lodestone which Father Daniel held up with small pieces of metal clinging to it.

"It is made of paste, isn't it?" cried Sondaarou, seizing it and finding to his surprise that it consisted of stone. Father Daniel showed that it was not paste by placing some pins on the table and letting them see how the lodestone attracted them.

He then showed the savages a crystal lens with eleven facets, which reflected an object eleven times. They never tired of looking at the reflections to see if they were all alike and of making the lens move to see if the representations moved with it. They uttered loud words of astonishment over a little magnifying glass by which a flea was made to appear as large as a beetle. They opened their eyes before the multicoloured lights of a prism: and they were endlessly interested in handling the joiner's tools, watching the French carpenter work over the wood, and trying to imitate his motions.

But nothing astonished the savages as much as the use the Fathers made of writing. They could not understand how those letters and words written with charcoal on the inside of a piece of bark, which conveyed no representation of anything to their mind, and which resembled rather the scratching of a bird, could have any meaning to anybody who looked at them. One day Sondaarou came into the mission house with an incredulous senator.

"Echon," he said to Brebeuf, "is it not true that thou, by making small scratchings on a piece of bark, can reveal to thy brother who is far away and cannot see or hear thee what thou sayest and what thou hast in thy mind?"

Brebeuf understood what his aboriginal friend meant and said that such was the case.

"Well, Echon," went on the Huron, "my uncle here has

declared that such things are impossible and that such powers have never been heard of in this or any other land, and are inherent only in the Oki, and that those who make such marvels must be demons. Wilt thou show him that what I have said is true ? ”

“ Certainly, Sondaarou, I will do so,” said Brebeuf. “ Let us find a piece of bark.”

“ Here I have everything with me,” said Sondaarou, who thereupon produced both bark and charcoal. “ Now, Echon, thou wilt say something to me, and thou wilt make thy marking on the bark, and I will take it to thy brother Anwennen, and my uncle will see that Anwennen will know what it is that thou hast said to us, no matter how far away he will be from thee.”

“ Very well, Sondaarou, I will do as thou sayest,” replied Brebeuf, taking the bark and the charcoal proffered to him. “ But, better still, I will mark down not what I say, but whatever thou or thy uncle desires to say to me. Let us ask thy uncle what words he would like to have carried to Anwennen.”

The old man thus appealed to looked gravely at the Frenchman and then spoke.

“ Here are the words that I would say to thee, and thou shalt make thy markings on the bark. They are the names of the four nations of the Hurons.”

And then he pronounced the names of the four nations and Brebeuf wrote them down—Attignaouentans, Ataronchronons, Arendarrhonons, Attignenonaghac—returning the bark to Sondaarou. A number of other savages had entered by this time and all went off to seek Father Daniel—“ Anwennen ” was their nearest approximation to his name Antoine—who happened at that time to be in the cabin of Awandawa, formerly his host.

Their astonishment was extreme when Father Daniel after a glance at the piece of bark read out the names. They would not be satisfied till he also had written another message to be read by Father Brebeuf ; and this going to and fro became one of the prime amusements with which they entertained visiting relatives from other villages. In the weeks and months that followed they submitted the Frenchmen to a hundred tests in the transmission of messages.

Needless to say the savages began to have a wonderful opinion of the intelligence of the Frenchmen. They gave expression to their admiration by calling them "ondaki," by which they meant to say that they were spirits and more than human. Father Brebeuf would use their astonishment to introduce to them a part of the message the Fathers had come there to preach.

"Now, my brothers," he would say, "you have seen the clock, and the prism, and the magnifying glass and these other things ; you have admired them, and you think you are right, when you see something extraordinary, in saying that those who made them must be spirits or demons, endowed with an intelligence more than the ordinary human being. And yet what is there so marvellous as the beauty of the sky and sun ? What is there more wonderful than to see the trees which are almost dead during the winter receive every spring a new life and a new investiture ? The corn you plant rots and falls, yet from its decay spring finer stalks and better ears. Yet you do not say : ' He who has made such manifold beauties and who every year renews the life of the forests and the fields, must be some supereminent intelligence wherever he dwells.' Yet manifestly such is the case, and it is to make that all-powerful and all-knowing being known to you that we have come to your land."

Meanwhile Father Brebeuf made frequent journeys

throughout the Huron peninsula, being absent sometimes several days together, renewing old acquaintances, and preparing the way for the other missionaries. Father Daniel and Father Davost, as soon as they could talk a little Huron, started visiting the cabins, instructing the children, doing what they could to comfort the sick, and familiarizing the people with the purpose of their mission.

While they engaged in these duties they lost no opportunity of improving their fluency in the language of the country, taking note of every new word and phrase, repeating it as soon as they heard it, and seeking to train both ear and tongue ; and they observed and learnt all they could about the customs, beliefs, manners, occupations and traditions of their savage pastorate.

The assaults on the senses which Brebeuf and his companions endured, the filth, the nakedness, the mockery of the youth, the menaces of the medicine men, the looks of suspicion, the fretfulness of the sick, the covert threat, the verbal insult, the obscenities, the overpowering smells, the smoke, the insects, the teeth of gaunt dogs—against these afflictions they closed their eyes and ears and mind. All these they had anticipated. Infinite patience and imperturbable serenity, a complete victory over interior weakness—this was part of their calling. But tact, good sense, and the golden mean had also to be observed, and here Father Brebeuf, out of the fund of his experience, could well counsel the younger Fathers.

When in the evening the savages had left, in obedience to the command of the clock, and the Fathers had a little time to themselves, they would bar the door and gather round the fire to exchange the experiences of the day and discuss the prospects of the mission. But the recurring subject of their conversation was always the Huron language. In this field

Father Brebeuf was instructor and Father Daniel showed great aptitude ; but they were always, all of them, making new discoveries, analyzing its syntax, exploring its secret laws, and continually expressing astonishment over the construction of a tongue as different from any European form of speech as heaven from earth.

CHAPTER IX

DREAM FEAST AND DEMON DANCE

SNOW fell and covered the ground in December, and Brebeuf welcomed it, as the Hurons took it as a signal for settling in their towns. For summer and autumn with them were the seasons for work and trade ; winter was the time of rest and festivity. In the central months of the year they were in their rural cabins, the squaws and maidens in the fields taking care of the crops, the men fishing, and the rest of them away on expeditions of war or among the French and neighbouring nations engaged in barter and trade. Towards the end and during the beginning of the year they were all together again in their several towns. This was the period of carnival, of high revelry, and of prodigality among them.

Father Brebeuf regarded the winter months as the time of spiritual harvest. At the beginning of the year he began to preach in public, gathering the children and such adults as were willing to assemble in the mission cabin for instruction.

The Superior also secured the help of the captains of Ihonatiria who, walking between the cabins and in the loud tones of the town crier, called the people together as for a gathering round the council fire. Then Father Brebeuf would stand before his dusky congregation, attired in surplice and biretta to add authority to his appearance. They would start with the Pater Noster, translated into the Huron tongue, Father Daniel chanting a couplet aloud and

the congregation chanting it after him. Then Father Brebeuf would talk of heaven and hell and recite some gospel stories, bestowing prizes of glass beads and sweetmeats on the children who answered well, to the great pleasure of their parents.

The service would be concluded with a talk by the Old Men, who propounded their difficulties, asked questions, and described their own belief. Hell terrified them ; heaven held out its arms to them.

" Let him who will go to those terrible fires of hell ; I want to go to heaven," some would cry, and they asked Father Brebeuf to show them the way, and take away the stones, the trees, and the thickets that would be obstacles in their path.

The Superior assembled the savages as often as the continual round of their councils, feasts, games, dances and ceremonial parties would permit, paying marked attention to the Old Men, who were the recognized depositaries of the wisdom of the country and who made the last decisions in council. The majority gathered willingly to hear the black robes and habitually nodded assent to all their exhortations. Their acquiescence indeed was such that the Jesuits were unable to elicit the sort of objections they wished to show their minds were working. When the savages heard the Ten Commandments they admitted they were reasonable, with nothing to censure. One ancient chief indeed was moved to express his admiration.

" Certainly these are important matters and worthy of being discussed in council," he said to the circle of senators who squatted and smoked round the Jesuit fire. " They speak the truth ; they say nothing but what is to the purpose ; we have never heard such discourse before."

To introduce the idea of a Creator of the universe to his primitive congregation, who considered that every object in nature had its own demon or spirit, Father Brebeuf employed the illustration of the child in the womb.

"Who," he would ask, "forms the body of this child? Who out of the one material forms the heart, the liver, the lungs, in short an infinite variety of members, all well-proportioned and joined one with another? Not the father, for these wonders take place in his absence; not the mother, for she does not know what takes place in her womb. If it be the father or the mother, why is not a son or daughter begotten at will? Why do they not produce children, handsome, tall, strong, active? And if the parents give the soul to their children, as some of you have claimed, why do they not impart to all of them great minds and all sorts of noble qualities, seeing that there is no one who would not desire to have such children if this were in his power?"

To this the elders listened in wonder, but made no reply. They gave manifest evidence however that this new kind of discourse was pleasing to them.

"Mark, my brothers," observed one, who was a frequent attendant, "mark that Echon and his brothers always speak connectedly and consistently with what they have said before. They never wander off as we and our magicians do. They never speak except to the purpose. We, on the contrary, speak heedlessly, barely knowing what we say. All this makes me think that what they say is true."

At the beginning the novelty of the services drew everybody, and then there was a falling off in attendance. The reasons were not far to seek. The counter attractions and distractions were endless, for feast and dance and game and therapeutic rite ended merely to begin again.

For one thing the Hurons, as Father Brebeuf warned his companions, were reckless gamblers, desperately staking all they possessed, clothing, porcelain, canoes, hatchets, pipes and squaws, so that their gambling losses were the chief incentives to murder and suicide among them. Cabin challenged cabin, and town town. In midwinter with the snow several feet deep the Superior saw the men of Ihonatiria return from a game of plum-stones at Onentisati stripped of all their furs and ornaments, barefoot and almost entirely naked, and yet in excellent humour. The game had been played to propitiate the demons of disease on behalf of Otowanda, a prominent sachem, bound to his mat with a crushed knee.

Father Brebeuf, visiting a sick captain at the town of Wenrio, was present at a game of wooden lozenges played as a medical prescription on the captain's behalf. The lozenges, black on one side and white on the other, were thrown up in a wooden bowl, which was struck sharply on the ground, the players betting on the black and white. Platforms of saplings were extended from side to side of the cabin to provide accommodation for the company, who sat facing each other, while two players struck the bowl on the ground between. The bets ran high and the excitement among the players was intense.

The tobacco pouch, housing his personal deity, which the Huron carried slung behind him, was held open during the game, and the small charm—a feather of the wild turkey, the claw of a bear, the head of a serpent, the ear of an Iroquois—was fervently invoked with chants and incantations. Since the game did not produce the curative effect desired the black robe was invited to show that his ministrations could do better.

Brebeuf and his companions saw the feasts, for which all the chief viands of the country were reserved, taking up the major leisure of the Hurons, whose bellies were their major gods. Every occasion was made the excuse for a feast. There was the feast of farewells, which captains gave when they were about to go on a journey. There was the feast of thanksgiving. There were feasts of dancing and song ; there were the remedial feasts, and the feasts dictated by dreams ; and these feasts often lasted whole days and whole nights, for there was no graver offence among the Hurons than not to empty the kettle.

The banquets were often on a scale of prodigal extravagance. At Contarea, a frontier town among the Arendarrhons, Father Brebeuf was present at a gorging feast where thirty great kettles slung over as many fires served twenty deer and four bears to a company who with swelling veins and bulging eyeballs out-ate the vultures during several days and nights, so that the medicine¹ man's rubric was fulfilled and not a morsel remained.

The invitation was brief. The host sent his representative to the desired guests with a small stick and the laconic announcement, " Come and eat," and each of these took his bark dish and spoon to squat in the festal cabin. The guest responded with a " Ho ! ho ! ho !" as the host in his best council voice described the contents of each steaming kettle. Then the squaws and damsels, whose privilege it was to watch their lords eat and later to fall on what remained, filled with their ladles the ouragans of the men. The banquet usually began in silence, but ended in laughter, banter, choral chanting and riotous dancing.

There was an infinite variety of dancing, and twelve of the dances were sovereign remedies for sickness. The captains

would proclaim the announcement of the coming festivity through the streets, and the warriors and maidens to serve as leading coryphées would be individually named.

At the hour appointed a jubilant throng would fill the lodge, from which all the fires would be raked. The aged and decrepit, patriarchal warrior and gap-toothed squaw, would fill the platforms with the babes in arms. The young boys and girls, wild as colts, would hang to poles and roofs. The masters of the dance would beat their drums, keeping time with their songs and tortoise-shell rattles. The men and women dancers, almost stripped of clothing—in mystical dances completely nude—but painted, feathered, and brightly trinketed, would dance with violence or measured movement according to ritual or mood. The dances usually lasted till dawn, and the bantering of the crowd was often merciless. Song, feast and dance would alternate through all the small hours.

Sacrifices to the demons of the air, the night and the sky, councils, receptions to ambassadors, mystic sweats, mating parties, remedial rites, the ceremonial torturing of prisoners, the infinite variety of ceremonies connected with their hunting, their fishing, their trade, their war plans, and almost every event of their lives, occupied a large portion of their remaining time. But interpreting and executing the dictates of their dreams, which were their oracles, were among their paramount duties; for the dream was the god of the Huron, the master of his life, the Cassandra that informed him of misfortune that was to come, the Aesculapius which prescribed the remedy for his maladies and his woes.

The voice of the dream was more compelling than the voice of any captain. It counselled murder, it commanded suicide, it exacted obedience from towns and nations as well

as cabins and individuals, and often led the entire country into extravagances of behaviour so extraordinary as to make it the abode of madmen.

At night Brebeuf and the other Fathers would lie on their boughs of fir and bark mats, as the tom-tom of the drums, the stamp of moccasined feet, the wild war-whoop, and the maniac accompaniment to dream feast and demon dance, entered with the wind and snow through the thin walls of their cabin and drove sleep away.

As they lay under their moose-skin coverings, stretched close to the fire to thaw their congealed limbs, tormented by insects and smoke, reviewing the events of the day, reluctantly they saw the figure of the simple savage, his mind a sheet of white paper, waiting for the imprint of the Word, slowly fading in their minds. In his place there loomed another and more inscrutable figure, in whom the black glittering eyes looked out of a soul and body, filled to the brim with hoary superstitions, invincibly wedded to a way of life in which the wildest vice ranked as the highest virtue and in which continence was an ideal totally unknown.

What precept or example or revelation or incentive could cope with this absolutism of all the appetites, naked, unbridled, universal, unashamed? What guarantee was there that they should even see morning, and that the whispering and spectre of a dream in the dark mind of a savage, with all his senses gorged, might not in a moment or an hour end their work with a tomahawk or a torch?

But usually these nocturnal forebodings disappeared with the mists of morning. With the sun high in the sky, and the murmurs of the dawn, the young missionaries were full of bustle again. The forest trail, the smell of cedar bark and resinous pine-knot, the hubbub of the cabins, the call of the

birds and beasts, the clamorous geniality of savage companionship, were all so many summonses to the work of their calling. To wrest this kingdom from the forces of darkness that had held it in unchallenged thrall through endless time was a work of conquest in which every hour had to yield its victory.

Towards the end of the winter Father Brebeuf was invited to the council, called by the Old Men of the Nation of the Bear, to deliberate on the preparations for the Feast of the Dead. The Superior, in the long war cabin at the metropolis of Ossossane, where a defile of pine fires furnished the sole light, and where squatted and smoked in a series of circles the senatorial wisdom of the Attignaouentans, read letters from *Sieur de Champlain* and *Sieur du Plessis Bochard*, general of the French fleet.

"I repeat to you," said the Jesuit, looking at the ghostlike figures and searching each immobile countenance, "I repeat to you what the great governor in Quebec and the general of the French fleet said to you and your brothers on your last trading expedition to the capital of New France. I exhort you to embrace the religion of the French as the only permanent means of cementing in the future the close alliance with the French who are alone capable of defending you against the Iroquois terror. For the French, if this were done, would readily come into your country; they would marry your daughters; they would teach you their arts and trades; they would carry many of your children to Quebec to be instructed and there they would take better care of them than their own fathers and mothers are able to do."

Then the Superior launched into the rudimentary theology which he desired to implant in their minds as a stem on which to grow the general conversion of the nation.

"The Christian religion, which I and my brothers have come here from the land of France in which we were born to teach to you, tells us that every man possesses an immortal soul which after this life will go to one or the other of two places, paradise or hell, and that for ever. But these places are widely different, since paradise is a place abounding in blessings of every kind, and free from all manner of ills; while hell is a place where there is no blessing and where ills of all kinds abound.

"It is a fiery furnace, in the midst of which the damned will be for ever tormented and burned without ever being consumed. You must therefore, Ancients of the Nation of the Bear, and depositaries of the learning of your tribe, ask yourselves to which of these two places you prefer to go yourselves and to take your families with you for ever. For you must do this while you are still alive, because the matter has been decided already with regard to your dead relatives in memory of whom you have met here to prepare to make funeral games and feasts. If you wish to go to heaven we are here to show you the way and help you in all things needful. All our other services to you are trivial and merely preliminary in comparison with this."

The Father then strode forward and presented in full view of the assembly, to the leading sachem, who rose from the earth on his left, a collar of twelve hundred beads of porcelain.

"This, O my uncles and my brothers," he said, "is presented to you by the French to smooth the difficulties on the road to paradise. We desire to be your brethren not merely on earth, but everlastingly also in the sky above."

The consignment of their dead ancestors to the bottomless pit and the fire that was never consumed did not please

the senators, who preferred to think of them as awaiting their relatives in the happy hunting grounds. They had however no way of refuting Echon, whose omnipotence and omniscience had already become a tradition among them. Did he not foretell the darkening of the sun and of the moon? Had he not in former years brought rain from the heavens as heated as an oven? With grave deliberation one elder rose after another to voice his fear of hell and preference for heaven.

However Arendaarato, who carried the mystic kettle in the Dream and Frenzy Feast, the sovereign cure for fevers and disorders of the brain, showed himself a sceptic.

"Those things may be true for thee, Echon, and all the French," he said, "but they would not do for us. Our country is not like thine. We have another god, another paradise, to which all our relatives have gone and to which we wish to go. Our customs are different from thine and those of the other pale faces."

As to an alliance and marriage with the French, nothing could please the Hurons better. Such a matter did not even require discussion. All the French had to do was to come and take their daughters, their squaws and their maidens, without ceremony of any kind, for there they were, already waiting to be taken.

This Father Brebeuf knew only too well. The Huron, in offering to the stranger the hospitality of his cabin, proffered him also the choice of his womenfolk, among whom the more attractive of the maidens were told off to bathe and adorn themselves and faithfully to serve and fulfil the duties of docile wife to the guest, should she find favour during his stay. The continence of *Sieur de Champlain*, who rejected that form of hospitality while among them, remained still

a source of wonder to the Hurons, to whom the abnegation of the Jesuits, and their high regard for chastity, appeared a continuous mystery and miracle. It was clear to Father Brebeuf that the idea of a stable marriage would take a long time to enter their minds.

For, in addition, the Huron women were at least as wanton as the men, not abstaining from waylaying even the Fathers with the voluptuous "I am thine" of awakened desire.

A union of the sexes lasted a day, a week, a month, or a year, as the case might be. The ceremony of espousal consisted merely of the acceptance of a present of porcelain made by the swain to the star-eyed object of his desires; and as these gifts were never returned, enterprising damsels increased their wealth with each betrothal and marriage, and advertised their attractions at the dances and reunions by their wampum decorations.

Nor to either sex was marriage or betrothal the least barrier to any form of profligacy, which the round of feast and dance and dream ceremony and mating party and nocturnal rites, to whose nude mysteries the youth of both sexes, ochred and garlanded, were sent as a family duty by their parents, continuously promoted, unattended by disrepute in any form. Every budding instinct of natural delicacy was banished under the influence of Huron domestic life, with ten or more families crowded round the fires of a single cabin open day and night from end to end to strangers or anybody, without a moment of privacy possible.

Towards the end of the summer Father Pierre Pijart and Father François Lemercier walked in on the mission house at Ihonatiria. Needless to say a heartfelt welcome awaited them. They were no more happy to reach their haven than

the Fathers already there were to receive them into it. The religious embraced with flowing eyes, and as they gazed at each other's emaciated faces speech failed them, for the long journey up through the Ottawa cataracts in the company of savage boatmen was no more wearing than a daily life passed amidst the cabins of the savages. Brebeuf was the first to gain control of his emotions.

"We greet you with open arms," he said to the travel-stained young priests, "as if you were angels from paradise. You observe the hut in which we live; probably one so wretched could not be found in the whole of France. And yet, I know not how, the Divine Goodness renders everything easy and we feel as comfortable here as we were in France. The sleep lying on our mats seems as sweet as if it were a good bed; the food of the country has ceased to disgust us. We have moreover obtained in eight days a provision of corn for a whole year, without making a single step out of our cabin. They have brought us dried fish in such quantities that we have been constrained to refuse some of it."

Father Lemercier carried numerous letters for all three priests, both from France and from Quebec, and the evening was spent round the cabin fire reading the letters by the light afforded by it and exchanging news. Father Lemercier told them that the letters from Canada were published and read from one end of France to the other, and that the whole nation was on fire over the missions.

That was a happy night in the mission house. The Fathers sat up till a late hour, and the newcomers looked with rapture at their bunks on the earth beneath the platforms of the room they used as a dwelling, the mattresses and pillows of spruce boughs and bark mats, the sheets and counterpanes

of moose and beaver skins. Savages were with them all the time, their black eyes gleaming with joy over the happiness of the black robes, their wide-open mouths uttering exclamations after their custom, in wild delight over the mutual affection of the Fathers.

CHAPTER X

CROSS AND THUNDER BIRD

WHEN Brebeuf first arrived in the Huron country from Quebec he learned that fire had destroyed several of the smaller towns and their provisions ; and during the winter he saw the crops buried beneath the snow while the harvesters lay sick in their dwellings. He had hoped that the spring and summer would bring relief, but he noticed with apprehension that while the winter was short and moderate the summer was extremely dry.

The sun continued to blaze in a cloudless sky. From Easter to the middle of June hardly a drop of rain fell, though the sandy Huron soil called for rain almost every day. As a consequence the rude crops of corn, squash, pumpkins, and tobacco were almost ruined, and the earth became so baked and arid that a chance spark here and there was enough to set forests and villages in an uncontrollable blaze.

The savages were in widespread apprehension and as Brebeuf and the other Fathers went about the country they could hear the medicine men and the sorcerers in one town after another exerting themselves to propitiate the Thunder Bird and expel the hosts of demons who carried sickness and death to the Hurons and their crops.

Night after night the ritual of the dance and of the sacrificial feast was carried on by the light of the blazing pine-knots. Night after night whole villages would remain without sleep to sweat and groan or prowl like panthers or shoot arrows at the stars at the dictate of some demoniacal

dream. In all the villages the chant of incantations and the beating of the drums bore witness to the universal dread that was tightening its grip on the nation.

Brebeuf had a strong feeling of pity for these savages, held in the remorseless grip of a life of suffering, toil and dissipation, to which the only release was often a death of appalling torment. But his chief concern was with the obstacles these accumulating tribulations would put in the way of their ultimate conversion. He had a good deal of apprehension that the time would not be distant when the excess of their anguish would cause them to look round for some scapegoat as the fountain and distributor of all their woes. But his concern was rather over the deleterious effect of rash judgments and rash acts on themselves than on those who had abandoned everything to come and help them.

Despite all the savage dancing, despite the propitiatory feasts, despite the prompt obedience to the command of demon and spirit in dream and sweating den, despite the bone-tipped arrows sent in showers to the skies, despite the general exorcizing beating of the cabin walls, despite the yelling and the shouting and the exhortory harangues of the captains from the roofs of the highest lodges to the demons who sported in the invisible air, not a drop of rain fell and the heavens remained as brass. It was then that in the town of Wenrio, Tehorenhaegnon, most renowned medicine man in the Nation of the Bear, came forward to promise health and wealth and prosperous crops to all the tribes. A council of elders was at once called to hear his commands.

"I will put an end to the drought," he told them. "I will bring rain from heaven. I will cure the pestilence. I will cut off the arms of the Iroquois. Have courage, therefore, my brothers; place confidence in Tehorenhaegnon. He is no

common man. The *oki* of the air are in league with him ; they listen attentively to his voice and his drum."

"Brother, thou bringest us good news, and we will do whatever thou sayest," the sagamore of the village told him. "Only make clear to our minds what thou requirest us to do and what presents it is meet that we make to thee and to the spirits for whom thou speakest."

"That is very simple, my brother. The spirits have commanded that you shall present to me the value of ten hatchets ; and you shall then feast and dance in my honour till these evils are banished. Dream you therefore, feast you, dance with all your might. Let no part of the ceremony be omitted, and by the might of Tehorenyaegnon the demons of the drought and of the pest will fly from your midst."

So the round of feasting and dancing was recommenced with redoubled fervour. The warriors, decked in paint and feathers, cut maniacal capers round the totem and incardined war posts. The squaws added their plaintive piping to the rumbling intonation of the men, while Tehorenyaegnon acted as master of the wild ceremonies. With his wand and his medicine cloak around him he took his station on the roof of the highest cabin in Wenrio and in the midst of wild contortions harangued and railed at the heavens.

But still the days passed and not a drop of rain fell. In time both Tehorenyaegnon and his clients were worn out, and murmuring began. Tehorenyaegnon came down from his rostrum with a somewhat crestfallen mien, and the word went round that he was no true magician, worthy of the respect of the people, but a bad sorcerer and a charlatan, who was their enemy rather than their friend.

A crowd of elders and young men, with the captain of the village at their head, sought out the medicine man.

"How comes it, Tehorenyaegnon, that thou hast not performed as thou promised to us? Art thou no true magician, but only a false sorcerer, the enemy of the people and worthy of death? Art thou with us or art thou in league with the demons of evil against us?"

There were strongly gripped tomahawks in the hands of several of the young men, and scowls upon their brows. It was a maxim among the Hurons that sorcerers, as opposed to true magicians, even before murderers and thieves, were worthy of death, and to call a man a sorcerer was but a preliminary to splitting his head.

It was clear that the medicine man recognized his danger. His face under the streaks of paint that ran across it assumed a darker hue and he showed signs of wilting. But he quickly pulled himself together while a gleam of cunning narrowed his black eyes. He pointed in the direction of Ihonatiria.

"It is true," he said, "that I have not succeeded in bringing rain from heaven or in making the crops ripen. But you mistake in blaming Tehorenyaegnon. The fault is not his but that of the pale faces who dwell among us."

Here he paused for a while in anxious reflection and then resumed, "Know you not that you have in your midst a house of ill-disposed people who have come to your country to make you die? How can you expect Tehorenyaegnon to exercise his full potency when the great red cross which is before the door of the black robes terrifies the Thunder Bird and drives away the spirits whom he has summoned to bring rain? There lies the guilt that has brought us the drought and famine and which has made the mysteries of Tehorenyaegnon powerless."

A gleam of satisfaction broke on the face of the medicine man as he ended. He had watched the effect of his words, and the impression produced was what he intended.

The scowls on the faces of the young braves deepened. The faces of the elders became more thoughtful. Those in front turned, as an angry murmuring made itself heard behind them. Tehorenhægnon ceased to be a figure of interest and the crowd began to talk among themselves.

"It appears to me that Tehorenhægnon is right, my brothers," said one of the elders who had not as yet spoken. "I have feared all along that the black robes cherished resentment for the death of Etienne Brulé, the guilt of which has been imputed to the Nation of the Bear. The black robes are powerful, and it is not possible for us to fathom what goes on in their minds. Is it not possible that they seek to draw down vengeance upon the whole country for the death of a single person?"

"I will tell you what it was that I heard when I was among the Algonquins of the Island," interposed another savage. "The Algonquins told us that the French came here only to compass our death and that from them came the contagion of last year."

He was interrupted by a naked savage who had been listening on the verge of the crowd and who now came forward with contorted visage dancing the war dance and swinging a gleaming hatchet.

"Death to the black robes!" yelled the furious newcomer, bursting through the crowd in such wise as to interrupt the colloquy and set them to action. His example was followed by others who to the cry of "The black robes" ran in circles stamping their moccasined feet. A general movement was made in the direction of Ihonatiria, but not many cabins had been passed when evidences of excitement in another corner of the village drew the attention of the demonstrators.

A small distance away a crowd of youths and boys were seen hoisting with wild war-whoops and excited raillery

a large object to the ridge of one of the cabins. As the newcomers approached, the object was seen to be a cross about the size of the emblem before the Jesuit cabin in Ihonatiria and formed of two saplings.

The newcomers hastened forward to join in the demonstration. The cross was placed upright amid the applause of the crowd, and the two savages who had ascended with it descended. Immediately birch bows and bone-tipped arrows made their appearance everywhere and some of the men were seen adjusting the leather bracelets on their left wrists to receive the impact of the bowstring in a game which they anticipated as great sport.

The cross at once became the target of innumerable arrows, shot in the midst of wild bantering on the part of the attending squaws and savage maidens. The shooting was very poor, but it served to distract the minds of the warriors, and the sentiment of hostility against the black robes died without leading to any rash deed that night.

Nevertheless in the course of the next day a group of elders called on Father Brebeuf at the mission house. Aenons, captain of the village of Wenrio, with whom Brebeuf had from the beginning been on friendly terms, was at the head of the delegation.

"Echon," he said to Brebeuf, "the people are aroused against the black robes and are blaming them for their miseries. They are particularly exercised against the cross which thou hast erected in front of thy cabin. I have been sent to thee to ask that it be taken down."

"Why do you want the cross taken down?" asked the Superior, looking from one sagamore to another.

"Well, it is believed by the people that the cross is the cause of the drought in our land and that it is this which frightens the Thunder Bird and causes the clouds to part

asunder as they approach our fields. If the crops do not mature I greatly fear that some of our young men will lie in wait for thee and beat thee to death, as they do sorcerers and other pernicious people in our land. What sayest thou? Our minds are in disorder and we know not what to do."

"It hath been said," added another of the elders, "that it is the red colour with which the cross is painted that is like a fire burning and flaming so that it divides the clouds in two as they pass over it. We have decided therefore that thou shouldst take down the cross and hide it awhile in thy cabin, or even in the lake, so that the thunder and the clouds may not see it and no longer fear it; and then after the harvest thou mayest set it up again."

Brebeuf, with Father Daniel at his side, listened gravely and then spoke.

"As for us, my brothers," he said to the elders, "there is only one thing we can say. We shall never take down or hide the cross where He died who is the cause of all our blessings. For yourselves, if you wish to take it down, consider the matter well. We shall not be able to hinder you, but take care that in taking it down, you do not make God angry and increase your own misery."

And then a note of subdued anger added force to his voice. "How can you really have faith in this deceiver, Tehorenhaegnon? That poor man does not know what he says. This cross has been set up for more than a year, and you know how many times there has been rain here in that time. Only an ignorant person would say that the thunder is afraid. It is not an animal. It is a dry and burning exhalation which, being shut in, seeks to get out this way and that. And then what does the thunder fear? This red colour of the cross? Take away then yourselves all those red figures and paintings that are on your cabins."

The elders listened to Brebeuf with a troubled but attentive mien. They had not put their suggestions forward confidently, but questioningly, after the manner of people who were aware that those they addressed knew much more than they did. When Brebeuf finished they turned to each other in perplexity.

"What Echon says is very true," at length the captain remarked. "I do not think it would be wise to touch the cross. And yet Tehorenyaegnon puts on it the blame."

"Well," interposed Brebeuf, "let us see what there is of truth in what Tehorenyaegnon says. Since he maintains that it is the colour of the cross of which the thunder is afraid I will tell you what we will do. We will paint it another colour, white or black or any other colour, and if, immediately after, it begins to rain you will be sure that Tehorenyaegnon has told the truth; but if not, then he is an impostor, who is simply fooling you to get presents from you."

"As thou sayest, Echon," Aenons answered with the rest of the elders.

So paint was at once procured and the two Fathers with the help of the savages painted the cross white. When the job was finished the elders took leave and published the news through the villages. It was everywhere agreed that the result would show whether Tehorenyaegnon was worthy of credence or not.

Tehorenyaegnon proved a false prophet. A week passed without any more rain than before and the repute of the medicine man fell to zero. Everybody in Ihonatiria moreover became angry with the medicine man for causing the disfigurement of the cross which had been regarded as one of the ornaments of the village. The catechumens were particularly incensed against him. The Old Men agreed that he

was only a deceiver. The young men spoke of splitting his head ; but by this time he was well beyond reach, having carried his mysteries to a distant town. Brebeuf saw his opportunity and decided to make the most of it.

He assembled in the cabin of the mission the men and women of Ihonatiria, who had taken no part in the ritualistic feasting and dancing which the sorcerer had ordained, having complete confidence in Brebeuf and the other Fathers, to whom in their eyes nothing appeared impossible, and whom they had continually importuned, asking that they should bring down the rain. Brebeuf invited also as many from the near-by towns as the cabin could contain and assuming his surplice and stole and biretta, addressed them.

" My brothers," he said, " there are several among you, particularly in this village of Ihonatiria, where we have taken up our abode, who believe in the words which we have spoken to you, knowing that we love you and have come here to assist you, and who think that we are possessed of all knowledge and are capable of performing all sorts of prodigies. But our knowledge, though great in comparison with yours, is limited, and there are a great many things which we cannot do.

" Neither we nor any other man can bring rain or fine weather, as you have often asked us to do. Only He who made heaven and earth is master of the elements and only He has the power to distribute good weather or bad weather as he pleases. Our only method is to have recourse to Him. The cross which we have planted so that all can see it has not hindered the rain, since it has often rained and thundered since we erected it. But it may be that Heaven is angry because unwise men among you have spoken ill of the heavenly powers and had recourse rather to the sorcerers

who are vain and foolish men, drawing whatever power they have not from the beneficent spirits but from the demons who dwell below.

"You know surely that all they do is done in order that you may be compelled out of your poverty and out of your hunger to give presents to them and enable them to live well. If they are able to do anything, they ought to be able to make rain. But, as you have seen, they have failed in this as they have failed in everything. I urge you to turn from these foolish medicine men. Instead turn your eyes in the direction of Him who made all, and who is the Author of all your blessings, concerning whom we have spoken to you from the beginning, and to whom we have desired to teach you to pray. Put your confidence in Him and you will not be disappointed."

The Hurons, while hard as bronze before spiritual ideals, like the Algonquins, were docile when influenced by temporal considerations. They were humbled in their suffering and they answered Brebeuf that they put no faith in their soothsayers, who always deceived them, and that they would do as he told them.

Then the Father told them : "We will walk in procession every day for nine days as we do in France. We shall implore the aid of Heaven and do not lose courage if you are not immediately heard."

And so the savages walked meekly every day to the middle of June, imitating the demeanour of the Fathers and apostrophising the crucified figure in prayers which natural rhetoric and the exigency of the time suggested to them, so that the eyes of the Frenchmen were often wet with tears as they listened to their fervent simplicity. And lo ! the miracle happened. On the last day of the novena the clouds piled up in a thunderous sky. Then the heavens opened and

flooded the earth, so that the dusky faithful were unable to finish their procession.

Joy was in every eye and on every lip. A plentiful harvest was given to all the villages, and the repute of the black robes, who could foretell the darkening of the sun and the moon, who dwelt in a forest palace, adorned with instruments and ornaments which the world had never seen before, was bruited abroad to the confines of the Neutral Nation who dwelt near the Iroquois, and the Tobacco Nation who dwelt on the road to the Great Water.

The name of Echon was henceforth in every mouth as great captain of the magicians and prince of medicine men, who held in his hands the powers of heaven and hell and who would henceforward cause their crops to ripen, drive away from them the demons of the pestilence, and be their rampart and their shield against all the fury of the Iroquois.

CHAPTER XI

THE FEAST OF THE DEAD

BREBEUF and Lemercier set out one day for Ossossane, seated on a bluff overlooking the Nottawasaga waters, the centre and capital of the Nation of the Bear, to which Brebeuf had been invited by all the sagamores of the country to be present at the Feast of the Dead, the most renowned ceremony among the Hurons.

It was the spring season, and though the snow had gone, the ground was still damp with the detritus of winter. The trees were still bare and assumed fantastic shapes in the gathering dusk. Squirrels hopped from their path and cranes and plovers squawked and flapped their wings in acknowledgment of their passing. As the Fathers neared Ossossane the hard journey had taken a good deal of their strength and only an occasional word passed between them. Suddenly, in the midst of a clearing, they stood still and looked at each other.

A faint murmur was heard coming from the inmost depths of the forest to their left, but of a quality so eerie and heart-piercing, so human and yet so primitive and elemental, that they could not tell whether it came from the throat of man or beast or merely represented an acoustic freak of the forest.

As they stood with their ears to the wind blowing from that quarter the murmur became more distinct and was sustained in such a manner that it appeared to be not

receding but approaching in their direction. In a moment the disquieting thought suggested itself that the sound proceeded from prisoners in the hands of the Iroquois, tortured and led to their doom and commanded to sing. As it was the custom for that cunning and ferocious nation to send scouts ahead the two Frenchmen stepped into a near-by thicket where they hoped they would be able to see without being seen. Meanwhile the mysterious sound came nearer and resolved itself into a subdued wailing, heartrending and prolonged.

The Fathers listened in breathless silence, seeking for some definite sight or sound that would reveal to them what lay behind this riddle of the woods. After an interval the sound of leaves rustling and of twigs breaking told them that their hiding-place was in danger of being invaded. Brebeuf parted the boughs and peered through them long and intently. Then he whispered to his companion.

"This is not how the scouts of the Iroquois move. The Iroquois is the embodiment of silence and treachery until he releases his war-whoop and his stroke together. I begin to have an idea of what we are going to see; not warriors on the warpath, but ambassadors of the dead."

The Superior, as he spoke, walked to the verge of the thicket and looked in the direction from which the sounds issued. Presently the head of a procession came into view out of the corridor of the trees opposite and crossed the clearing in the direction of Ossossane. The procession consisted of savages, both men and women, all heavily wrapped in furs and heavily ornamented. The women wore porcelain crowns on their heads and porcelain collars over their necks and breasts. Their black hair was carefully braided, and tied with coloured strips of skin, beneath which ear-rings of shell and bone hung almost to their shoulders. The men were

painted with ochre and glistened with the oil of the sunflower, their hair erected in fierce ridges or flowing in luxuriance at one side.

But stranger than the appearance of the men and women themselves were the burdens which they carried. Lemer cier had to look twice to be sure that these burdens were not human also. For most of them were crudely human in shape, with head and body and legs, and accoutred in the costumes of the savages. There were bundles that looked like children and other bundles that looked like gigantic grown men, with immense staring eyes, and protruding ears, and great hands grasping the tomahawk. There were other bundles that were in the shape of women, carrying masks, and with the hair streaming on their shoulders. The bundles were carried by these strange pilgrims both in front and behind. Some of the mummies were carried on a species of litter; and some of them were ordinary shapeless bundles, wrapped in beaver skins and carried on the backs of the pilgrims.

"Let us go," said Brebeuf at length. "They are people from Arenta carrying their dead to the funeral feast at Ossossane. I recognize some of those with whom I have talked."

When they arrived at Ossossane they found that Father Daniel was there before them with Baron, Dominique and Petitpré, three of the Frenchmen at the mission house at Ihonatiria. The village had the appearance of a fair, for it was the eve of the feast, and the general burial was to begin the next day.

From every corner of the territory of the Nation of the Bear, through all the forest trails of the country, processions were wending and assembling the "souls" of all the villages. The funeral games had begun several days before, and from morning till night the living were making presents to the

youth of the country who had to take the place and often the names of the heroes of war and the chase who were dead.

On one side the young women were shooting with bows and arrows for the prizes displayed as incentives to them—a girdle of dyed porcupine quills, copper discs and large shell ear-rings, and collars and bracelets of white and purple wampum. Elsewhere carved war-posts were made the targets of flying hatchets; and sticks and arrows were being sent up in the air to be spiked and split by the most skilful among the archers.

Meanwhile one procession of souls after another arrived, two or three hundred persons carrying by litter or on their backs their beaver robe wrappings of bones stripped of flesh, or of entire bodies of those of their relatives whose deaths had been recent. All were singing their wail of the march, the cry of wandering souls in the winds of the forest at night, seeking their way to the happy hunting grounds and to the village of souls which lay towards the setting sun.

“Hae! hae! hae!” sounded the chief note of the refrain in the ears of the Frenchmen. When the cry was heard on the outskirts of the village, the people of Ossossane went forth to meet the newcomers and to dry their eyes with presents. The mourners from each village were conducted to the cabins prepared for them in the capital; and here each precious bundle was hung on the poles of their dwelling, while the beaver robes and other presents were spread in view of all.

Brebeuf and the other Frenchmen found themselves lodged a quarter of a league away in a large cabin given over to the village of Ihonatiria, where fully a hundred souls hung or were fixed upon the poles of the rude dwelling. Here the captain of Ihonatiria entertained the people of his

immediate tribe in the name of the deceased captain whose name he had inherited. The presents which the relatives made for the feast—the robes, the kettles, the tomahawks, and the ornaments of wampum, were strung on poles and rafters on both sides.

The song of the deceased captain was sung by his heir in accordance with the desire of the fallen chief. The guests shared with one another every small luxury they brought with them, bear's grease and beaver tail, the wing of a wild fowl, the liver of a woodchuck. They wound up the banquet by imitating the cry of the disembodied spirits of their relatives, repeating their refrain of "Hae! hae! hae!" as the embers glowed dully red and darkness began to wrap the cabin round.

Brebeuf and his companions slept little that night. Seldom before had the chasm that separated them from these aborigines appeared so wide. As they lay on their beds of spruce boughs the bundles of souls above them assumed fantastic shapes and became wreathed with dark meanings. The odour of the cabin was that of the charnel-house. All night long wail answered wail in one cabin or another, as though strange birds of night were flapping their wings outside and calling to one another.

Scores of naked men and women slept pell-mell together, their tanned and roasted bodies revealed every now and then by a tongue of resinous flame. There were savages who muttered to each other in dreamy wakefulness, others who talked noisily in their sleep; and others again who jumped violently to their feet, impelled by some wild dream born of an over-gorged stomach. Among the women some lay in the embrace of their dead relatives, whom they bemoaned and caressed between intervals of sleep.

Morning came and then midday, when all received advice

to hold themselves in readiness, for the ceremony was about to begin. Brebeuf and his companions stood aside and with attentive eyes watched a spectacle that spoke with the tongue of a hundred homilies on man's mortality. The savages at the word of command took down their packages of souls, and on the ground before the squaws unfolded all that remained of their relatives and bade the recumbent bodies and bones their last tearful adieus.

Brebeuf's eye was riveted by the tenderness which a comely young woman displayed towards the remains of her father and children. He knew her as the daughter of a chief who had died at an advanced age and who was influential in the country. She combed the dead man's hair and fondled his bones one after the other with as much affection as if she desired to bring them back to life. She placed beside him his package of council sticks, which represented the books and state papers of the country.

As for her children, she put on their arms bracelets of porcelain and beads, and bathed their bones with her tears. They had indeed to tear her away from her precious burden before the procession could start. Finally the captain of Ihonatiria walked at the head of his tribespeople bearing the body of his predecessor ; the men followed, and then the squaws and young women. In due time the national cemetery was reached.

This was an open clearing in the wilderness of spruce and pine which Ossossane separated from the bay and the lake. There was in the middle of it a great newly opened pit, ten feet deep and thirty feet wide. Around it stood a scaffold, a well-constructed staging, forty-five to fifty feet in width and from nine to ten feet high. Above this were a number of saplings laid across in parallel rows and cross poles to which the packages of souls were to be hung and bound. The bodies

of those who had recently died, being destined for the bottom of the pit, had been placed the preceding day under the scaffold, stretched upon bark or mats fastened to stakes about the height of a man on the borders of the immense national cemetery.

The tribes of all the villages met around this last resting place of their nation and laid on the ground their parcels of souls. They unfolded also parcels of robes and all their other presents, hanging them in the public view to the number of over twelve hundred, contributed by several thousand mourners. When the signal was given, the savages ran as if to the assault of a town and ascended the staging to hang their packages of souls, village by village. That done, the ladders were taken away and the multitude gathered round a rostrum of the chiefs to hear the announcements regarding the presents and their distribution.

In the evening the Fathers stood by, as the masters of the Feast of the Kettle prepared the grave for the reception of the souls. They saw the savage ministers line the bottom and sides of the pit with large new robes, each of ten beaver skins, in such a way that they extended more than a foot out of it. After sun-down they saw them let down the recent dead into the pit with all the mourners present to display their grief, in a crescendo of tumultuous wailing.

Brebeuf and his companions were pushed to the outskirts of the frenzied crowd and sought to watch the spectacle from an elevation near by. Darkness was now falling and large log fires provided light. Brebeuf turned to the young Frenchmen near him, the three of them watching with dilated eyeballs the eerie scene.

"There, my brothers, you have a picture of the confusion among the damned, a thousand times more eloquent than anything I could say to you," he said, pointing forward.

The young men nodded without taking their eyes from the picture. On all sides the savages could be seen letting down the half-decayed bodies. Everywhere was heard a horrible din of confused voices of men and women, talking in savage ejaculations, and listening to no voice but their own. Ten or twelve other savages were in the bed of the grave, dovetailing the bodies. They had put in the very centre of the pit three large kettles, which were of a quality that assuredly only souls could use ; for one had a hole through it, another had no handle, and the third was heavily battered. There were no porcelain collars except such as were on the bodies.

That was all that was done that evening. The Nation of the Bear passed the night around the national grave, lit innumerable fires, and slung as many kettles. It was designed to commit the bones to the grave at dawn, and one by one the company laid itself to sleep on skins and boughs laid on the bare earth.

But in the silence of the night an accident happened which precipitated the ceremony. One of the souls, too heavy for the cord that held it, fell of itself into the pit. The noise awoke the tribes, who immediately ran to mount the scaffold, emptying each package indiscriminately into the pit in superstitious haste. Then amid the glare of innumerable red fires all the tribes chanted their songs of mourning to the stars in sorrowful refrains, in which the treble of the women mingled pathetically with the barks and howls of the men.

" Did you ever hear anything so lugubrious and sorrowful ? " asked Lemercier.

" I never did," answered Brebeuf. " There is a horrible sadness about it all." And then listening a while further he said :

"If voices from the abyss of despair in which these unhappy souls are plunged could be heard on the earth they would surely sound something like this."

"And surely the picture cannot be far removed from hell itself," put in Baron, one of the *donnés* of the mission.

"You are right, my brother," said Brebeuf, and then turning to the other priests he said, "Father Daniel and Father Lemercier, heaven has surely brought us to this spot tonight. What sight could we ever see more likely to prompt us to use every effort for the conversion of those savage people? Let us here renew our vows that nothing we can do will ever be left undone, no work ever left unfinished, no peril ever avoided, that will help us to save these peoples from the abyss in which they have been cast from the birth of the world."

The Frenchmen then approached the pit. They saw five or six savages at the bottom of a depth of two feet of bones, arranging these human remains with poles. That done the ministers of the dead turned back and laid over the bones the robes which bordered on the edge of the pit; and they covered the remaining spaces with mats and bark. Then they heaped the pit with sand and wooden stakes until a small mound covered the hole. That was the end. Thus the Nation of the Bear had taken leave of those of the tribe who in recent years had joined the majority of their fellows in the happy hunting grounds.

CHAPTER XII

THE IROQUOIS CAPTIVE

LATER in the season news came to Father Brebeuf that an Iroquois prisoner had been brought to the town of Onnentisati and that his captors were preparing to subject him to the ceremonial torture and put him to death. Sentence was to be passed on him by one Sandascou, to whom the captive had been surrendered to dry his tears and assuage his grief, in consideration of a nephew of that chief, who had been captured, boiled and eaten by the Iroquois. The Superior, taking two of the younger Fathers with him, at once set out for Arontaen, which had been chosen as the place of execution, not despairing of winning the first of the Iroquois for the company of the blessed.

The three Fathers reached the town a little while before the prisoner and from the edge of the cabins saw him advancing in the distance, singing in the midst of half a hundred Hurons who were escorting him. As he approached they were surprised to find him looking more like a victor returning in triumph from war than a victim doomed to a death of horror. A gorgeous robe made from the fur of a dozen beavers hung in ample folds around him. There was a heavy collar of porcelain beads around his neck and a porcelain crown was around his head. His hands nevertheless were securely tied.

A large crowd met him at the entrance to the village and there a circle was formed and he was made to squat on the

earth in the centre. The multitude gave way as Brebeuf and the other Fathers sought to approach him.

It gave pleasure to the savages on occasion to treat with marked respect a prisoner whom they held securely in their power, and Brebeuf saw only humanitarian acts exercised towards him. However he had already been quite roughly handled. One of his hands was badly bruised by a stone, and a finger of the same hand had been violently wrenched from the knuckles. The thumb and forefinger of the other hand had been nearly taken off by a hatchet blow, and the hand was rudely swathed in maple leaves and bark. There was evidence also that fire had already been applied to him. The joints of his arms were badly burnt, and in the biceps of the left arm there was a deep wound.

As Brebeuf approached to look more closely the Iroquois raised his eyes and regarded him attentively. He looked also at Lemer cier and the slim figure and beardless face of Garnier, but rested his gaze again on Brebeuf, while the savages around stood silent and looked at both.

The Iroquois warrior was a splendid specimen of savage manhood in the prime of life. The temples and sides of his head had evidently recently been closely cropped, and the hair in the centre stood up like the bony protuberance on the crest of a cassowary. His legs and arms were heavily tattooed, and there were the painted remnants of rings and geometrical figures on his forehead and cheeks. The muscles stood out on his abdomen and back, tanned almost to blackness, and round and hard almost like those of a Greek statue.

Brebeuf found himself searching in this strange figure for the solution of the enigma that made the Iroquois a figure of dread and symbol of disaster to all the surrounding nations. Were they engendered like the children of men or

were they demons incarnate whose proper habitat was in another world? Would the day come when a gate would be opened to the gospel among those nations on the Mohawk also?

The Jesuits, who courted death every day, who were willing to die a thousand deaths to rescue a single soul, who left no other accessible tribe unvisited, had learnt to avoid the country of the Iroquois as being as little amenable to the Word as a den of panthers. But Brebeuf saw nothing but what was human in this forlorn warrior, decked in his ironic finery, and gloried in the thought that his mortal agony might be destined as a quick passage to the everlasting happiness of heaven.

The Iroquois continued to gaze at the Father with marked intentness, as though at an oasis of sympathy in the midst of a cruelty that menaced him on every side or as at an ambassador from another world who might bring him some unheard-of respite or release. Brebeuf and Lemer cier were talking together in front of the prisoner, when savage voices began to call the Superior by name. The Hurons had been waiting to see the Father exercise some pale-face sorcery on the prisoner, and at last had fallen back on the established procedure.

"Echon, make the Iroquois sing," called a brave, seizing the Superior by his soutane from behind. But Echon turned and faced the crowd.

"My brothers," he said in a voice such as all could hear, "I and these other pale-face Fathers have not come to the village of Arontaen to make this prisoner sing or to join you in inflicting torture upon him. We have come only in the hope that we will be able to teach him what he ought to do, as we have sought to teach you, that he and you may be forever blest after death."

Then he turned towards the Iroquois.

"My brother," he said, in a dialect of Huron which the Iroquois usually found it easy to understand, "we are of the French and have come to this land in the hope that we may be able to show not only the Hurons and the Algonquins, but also the Iroquois, the way to everlasting peace. We feel compassion for thy unfortunate condition. We shall be happy to minister to thee at whatever hour thou mayest desire."

"We have heard of the black robes in our land," answered the prisoner, whose name Brebeuf learnt was Nayuga. "I shall be grateful for thy help."

Meanwhile the kettles had been slung near by and the Hurons started bringing their prisoner food from all sides—sagamité, squashes and fruit. The courtesy and the hospitality were such as might have been extended to a fond brother recently returned from the perils of a long journey. From time to time the prisoner was called upon to sing. This he did with a vigour and depth of voice that greatly astonished the Frenchmen, for they knew he had been doing hardly anything else day and night since his capture, according to savage custom. His singing was rewarded with guttural applause. "Ho! ho! ho!" came from all the savages around, and a tribute of appreciation was rendered by Enditsacone, one of the captains, who was at the head of his guard.

"My nephew, thou hast good reason to sing, for no one is doing thee any harm; behold thyself now among thy kindred and friends."

The speaker raised his voice as though he was a village crier making a proclamation to the crowd. It was part of the savage ritual.

A feast to his newly adopted kindred was now expected

from the Iroquois and a dog was put into the kettle for that purpose. Before it was half cooked he was brought into the largest cabin in the village where the people were wont to gather for public banquets. As he moved away the Iroquois looked in the direction of the group of three Jesuits and spoke to one of his guards.

The guard approached Brebeuf.

"Echon," he said, "the Iroquois desires that thou shouldst follow him and be his guest. He desires me to tell thee that he has been very glad to see thee and desires that thou wilt not abandon him."

"I shall go to him," the Father answered.

The Jesuits then entered the cabin where the dog feast was being given, and walked through the throng of squatting savages towards the prisoner, Brebeuf seating himself on the earth beside him.

"Be of good cheer, my brother," he at once said to the Iroquois. "Thou wilt in truth be miserable during the little of life that remains to thee, but if thou wilt listen to me and our Fathers and will believe what we say to thee, we can assure thee of eternal happiness in Heaven after thy death." And forthwith he began to instruct him.

Not merely the Iroquois but the Hurons in his immediate vicinity listened with close attention to the discourse of Brebeuf. The eyes of the Iroquois glistened with a new hope and he hung on every word that fell from the lips of the pale-face. Some of the words he repeated aloud himself, as several of the Huron braves assisted as interpreters, making clear what Brebeuf's imperfect Huron left unexplained. At one point the Father asked the Iroquois to which of the Five Nations of the Iroquois he belonged.

"I am of the Senecas," he replied.

Brebeuf was astonished.

"My brothers," he said, turning to the Hurons around him, "did not the Senecas make peace with the Hurons. That being so, this brave is not from the enemy's country; he is a native of Sonontouan."

"That is so," replied one of the captains, "But our Iroquois nephew did not accept the treaty, as he himself admits. He married into the Onondagas with whom neither the Nation of the Bear nor any other of the nations of the Hurons have had any treaty, in order to be always free to carry arms against our tribes. Is not that so, my nephew?"

The Iroquois admitted that it was so. As he did so the dog that was the *pièce de résistance* of the feast was taken from the kettle and cut, a large portion being presented to the prisoner. He shared the luxury with those who were near him, and who, since he was unable to use his hands, put morsels of it into his mouth.

When the feast drew near its end the three Jesuits withdrew to the cabin where they had taken lodgings, not expecting to see the prisoner again till the next day. They were surprised therefore when they were told that the prisoner was coming to lodge with them. He came with a goodly band of savages, who in spite of the eagerness of the young warriors to start the work of torture, left Brebeuf all the necessary leisure to confer with him, even giving attentive ear themselves. Noting that people were present from nearly all the nations that spoke the Huron tongue Brebeuf addressed his discourse alike to the prisoner and to them. At the end he baptized the Iroquois, giving him the name of Joseph.

During the night the hum of voices in the village hardly ceased, for anticipation and excitement over the morrow were deep. The Jesuits, lying on their mats, and attempting vainly to close their eyes, could hear the voice of the Iroquois

warrior conversing during the small hours with the Old Men of the village and the captains who formed his guards on the affairs of his country with perfect composure and geniality on every side.

In the morning the prisoner was brought to Tondakhra near by, where lived Sandascou, to whom the Iroquois had been given. The Huron chief greeted the prisoner with extraordinary gentleness.

"My nephew," he said pleasantly, "thou must know that when I first received news that thou wert at my disposal, I was wonderfully pleased, fancying that my nephew whom I lost in war had been, as it were, brought back to life, and was returning to his country. At the same time I resolved to give thee thy life; I was already thinking of giving thee a place in my cabin, and thought that thou wouldst pass the rest of thy days pleasantly with me.

"But now that I see thee in this condition, thy fingers gone and thy hands half consumed, I change my mind, and I am sure that thou wouldst now regret to live longer. I shall do thee a great kindness to tell thee that thou must prepare to die; is that not so?"

The Iroquois showed no disquiet, but did not reply.

"It is the Tohontaenrats who have treated thee so ill, and who also cause thy death. Therefore be of good courage, my nephew; prepare thyself for this evening, and do not allow thyself to be cast down through fear of the tortures."

"What will be the nature of my torment?" asked the Iroquois, showing a mien of complete firmness.

"Thou wilt die by fire," answered Sandascou courteously.

"That is well, that is well," was the response which the Jesuits heard.

While adopted nephew and uncle conversed a comely savage maiden, her tresses falling with luxuriance over her

shoulders, advanced with sorrowful mien and handed food to the Iroquois. She was the niece of Sandascou, and sister of the dead nephew, and she acted as if in very truth she beheld her resurrected brother in the figure of the adopted prisoner. All her actions were marked by extreme solicitude. She spoke to the prisoner, her eyes bathed in tears. Meanwhile the captain put his own pipe in the prisoner's mouth, wiped with his own hands the sweat that rolled down his face, and cooled him with a feather fan.

At noon the prisoner gave his Astataion, or farewell feast, according to the custom of those about to die, and the people attended in crowds. As the feast was being prepared the doomed host walked through the middle of the cabin and in a strong voice addressed his throng of guests.

"My brothers," he said, "Nayuga is going to die; amuse yourselves boldly around him. He fears neither tortures nor death."

Then he sang with tremendous force, drawing the song from the pit of his stomach, and as he sang he danced the whole length of the cabin, with a crowd of other dancers at his heels. After the feast he was taken back to Arontaen to die there.

CHAPTER XIII

THE TORTURE BY FIRE

THE savage ritual had by this time come to be more in consonance with the feelings of the Hurons towards the prisoner and preparations for the torture began. The prisoner had begun to feel the sense of doom and asked continually that the black robes might be kept near him. There was a good deal of perplexity on the faces of the Huron warriors as they watched the Fathers losing no occasion to give him words of consolation. But the prisoner himself was a figure of strong appeal; the dark eyes of the village maidens, usually foremost in the torture, followed him around, and there was one, Chiwatoua, who inquired of Brebeuf if there would be harm in giving him a dagger with which to escape the extremity that awaited him.

The torture was to begin at sun-down and the savage ritual required that it should not be ended before the dawn. As dusk gathered and the appointed hour approached, the three Fathers sought the cabin of Atsan, war captain of the Nation of the Bear, where the tragedy was to be enacted. It was the "House of Cut-Off-Heads," where the councils of war were always held. Brebeuf and his companions took a place where they could be near the victim, desiring to be of service to him whenever they could, steeling themselves for an ordeal likely to surpass the limits of human endurance. Brebeuf, accustomed to ordeals of every kind, was grave and composed; the younger priests trembled violently.

As the sun declined the fires were lighted in the great cabin and all the people gathered to do their part. The Frenchmen counted eleven large fires in the middle space about six feet distant from each other and throwing off a furious heat. The old men had taken their places on the raised platforms which extended the length of the cabin on both sides ; the women and the young men were below and so crowded that they were piled one on the other. Perspiration already streamed down the copper-coloured, naked bodies. All the savages on the lower tier, the women and the young men, had provided themselves with brands and glowing pieces of bark with which to burn the victim, and cries of the wildest and fiercest joy resounded on every side.

As a preliminary act, Aenons, captain of the town of Wenrio, counselled the youths and maidens as to how they should behave.

" Do your duty well, my nephews and my nieces," he said. " The ceremonial on which you are about to begin is an important event, to be viewed by the Sun and the God of War. During no part of this night must you go to amuse yourselves in the woods. Stay to the end. In the beginning you are counselled to burn only the legs of the prisoner. It is required that the Iroquois shall hold out till the rising of the great Sun, who will look down on the consummation of your work."

As the last words were uttered the Iroquois, still decked in finery, was brought in. The Frenchmen had grown attached to the prisoner during their brief and exciting intercourse, and they could barely lift their eyes to look on a countenance on which there could be no room for anything but terror and despair. Amid a tumult of cries, the sustained quality of which indicated that the savages were moved to their depths, he was made to sit on a mat, while his hands were

bound. He was then directed to rise and make a tour of the cabin, and this he did singing and dancing, as he was commanded. That marked the limit of the forbearance of his judges.

As he returned to the mat the war captain advanced to his side and pronounced sentence.

"Oteiondi will despoil the Iroquois of the robe which I hold," he said. "The Ataronchronons, neighbours of the Nation of the Bear, will cut off his head, which will be given to Ondessone, with one arm and the liver to make a feast."

The prisoner was stripped and the torture began. He was directed to walk or rather run around the fires, while the banked savages thrust forward their firebrands to burn him as he passed, smothering his cries with a chorus of horrible yells. The entire cabin glowed like the inside of an oven, and across the flames and the dense smoke the howling barbarians vied with each other like demons in devices to give no respite to a victim whom during most of that day they had been caressing with endearing words.

At the other end of the cabin Brebeuf and his companions could see the savages breaking the bones of the victim's hands by sheer force. Some pierced his ears with pointed sticks which they left in them. Others bound his wrists with cords till the flesh gaped and the bones snapped. When he paused to catch his breath he was made to repose on hot ashes and burning embers. At the seventh round his strength appeared to fail him. After he had rested for some time on the embers they attempted to make him rise to his feet, but it was found he could not stir. As one of the butchers applied a brand to his loins he was seized with a fainting fit, and the end looked as though it was going to come soon, for the young men started to gather the fire around him. But at this point the captains intervened.

"It is important that he should see daybreak," they said.

Following this the savages lifted the Iroquois and placed him on his back on a mat. Most of the fires were extinguished and the people went out into the night.

The three Fathers stood by on the chance that they might be of some service to the victim and hoping against hope that the swoon would continue till morning. However his guards, now his physicians, were of a different mind, for the sport had been interrupted much too soon. They did all they could to make him return to his senses, continually plying him with drinks of water.

At the end of an hour the victim came to and opened his eyes. As he did so the attendant Hurons shook him and commanded him to sing. This he manfully made an effort to do, but at first with very poor results. A broken and dying voice was all that he could muster; but after a time he appeared to rally, and sang in a voice so loud that he could be heard outside the cabin. That was all those collected outside needed.

In a few minutes the young braves and the maidens assembled again and began to talk to him. Finding him still sentient they made him sit up and proceeded with the second act in the tragedy. But it was more comedy than tragedy to them. There was no longer any trace of demoniacal fury on the faces of the savages and their women who thus afflicted their victim with the last measure of imaginable cruelty. On the contrary their flaming countenances spoke of nothing but a wild and ferocious joy.

Nor was there any roughness in their speech. All their words were of affection and kindness and amiable raillery. There was no strife as to who should burn him. Men and women each took their turn, taking leisure in the interval to look their victim over and meditate some new device to

make him feel the fire more keenly. But they hardly burnt him anywhere except on the legs, reducing these, however, to a wretched state, with the flesh all in shreds. Some applied brands to his thighs and did not withdraw them until he uttered loud cries. When he ceased moaning they again began to burn him, repeating the act seven or eight times—reviving the fire, which they held close to his flesh, by blowing upon it. Others bound cords around him and set them on fire, thus burning him slowly and causing him the keenest agony.

There were some who made him put his feet on red-hot hatchets and then pressed down on them. The Fathers as they stood in horror near by could hear the flesh hiss and see the smoke from the roasting rise even to the roof of the cabin. They saw young warriors strike him methodically on the head and shoulders with their carved and painted clubs, each with a ball at the end larger than a man's fist. They saw others passing pointed sticks through the lobes of his ears, and others breaking such bones of his fingers as had not before been broken. Meanwhile the fire was stirred around him.

The raillery, the expressions of endearment, and the compliments never ceased.

"Here, uncle, I must protect thee from the cold," one young brave would say; and the uncle a moment after would be changed into a canoe.

"Come," another would say as he passed his brands over the victim's legs, "let me caulk and pitch my canoe. It is a beautiful canoe for which I paid a heavy price. I must stop all the water holes well."

Another would solicitously inquire: "Where, my brother, do you prefer that I should warm you?" and the sufferer was compelled to indicate some particular place.

Then it would be the turn of another brave. "Now, really," he would say, "for my part I do not know anything about burning. It is a trade that I have never practised," while his actions would show an efficiency in cruelty greater than the others.

"It is not right that thou shouldst be abandoned to the cold," another would say. "I must give thee some warmth."

"Now as my uncle has kindly deigned to come and die among the Hurons, I must make him the present of a fine hatchet," would be the contribution of another, as he applied a red-hot hatchet to his feet.

There was another who made him a pair of leggings with some ragged skins which he set on fire, and after asking the Iroquois if he had enough, and receiving the response, "Yes, my nephew, it is enough, enough," would proceed to burn him still more.

There were intervals when his torturers gave the Iroquois food to eat, and large quantities of water to drink, pouring it down his throat with the design of assisting him to endure till morning. The Jesuits, as they stood by helpless and themselves enduring moral torture, saw at once the ears of green corn intended as food for the prisoner roasting side by side with the hatchets being made red-hot to burn him. And often the Hurons were giving him corn to eat at the moment they were applying the burning iron to his feet. At one time he turned his head away, refusing to eat.

"Indeed," they said, thrusting the corn cob violently into his mouth, "dost thou think that thou art master here?"

Then one said: "For my part, I believe that thou wert the only captain in thy country. But let me see. Wert thou not cruel to prisoners thyself more than once? Didst thou not enjoy burning them, after the gentle manner of the Iroquois? It did not occur to thee that some day thou thyself mightst

be treated in the same way ; or perhaps the Iroquois had thought they had killed all the Hurons ? ”

The Fathers marvelled at the patience of the prisoner, a trait markedly conspicuous among all the savages, in the face of the extremities which they continually found before them.

As morning drew near, Brebeuf turned to his companions.

“ Mark you, my Fathers,” he said, “ the patience of this our new Christian. Up to the present he has made no attempt to reply to their taunts and jeers. Not an abusive or impatient word has escaped his lips. Such fortitude is an example to us all.”

CHAPTER XIV

THE HAND ON THE SKEWER

AS Father Brebeuf spoke the Hurons suspended their ghastly work and turned to him.

"Hast thou compassion for the Iroquois?" Enditsacone, one of the warriors, asked him.

"Most assuredly we have deep compassion for your prisoner, and long greatly that he may soon be delivered from his sufferings and go to heaven, where, being baptized, he will be for ever blest," answered Brebeuf.

"Hast thou not spoken to us of sufferings even greater than we are capable of inflicting?" the Huron again asked.

"I have indeed," said the Jesuit. "I and the rest of our Fathers continually preach to you both of the joys of paradise and the grievous afflictions of hell. Cruel as you are to this poor wretch the devils are still more cruel to the condemned in hell. What you are making this your enemy endure is only a rough picture of the tortures suffered by lost souls, whether you consider the multitude of them, or their magnitude and the length of their duration. If we have baptized this Iroquois it has been only to deliver him from these punishments and to enable him to go to heaven after his death."

This speech displeased the Hurons and angry cries were raised.

"How now," said one incensed brave, shaking a burning tomahawk, "is this Iroquois not one of our enemies? It

matters not at all whether he go to hell and be burned there for ever."

"My brother," answered Brebeuf, "let me tell thee, that the God of whom we speak is God alike of both the Iroquois and the Hurons, as well as of all men who are on the earth. He is not a God that despises anyone, friend or enemy, ugly or poor. What wins the heart of God is not the beauty of the body, the graces of the mind, or abundance of this world's goods, but an exact observance of His sacred Law. It is true that He has prepared the fires of hell, but those fires have been lighted for sinners only, in whatever nation they may be.

"At the moment of death and the departure of the soul from the body, he who is found guilty of mortal sin is condemned for ever, whether he is of the Iroquois or of the Hurons. As to you, there is no means available that can prevent you from burning and tormenting your captive till he is dead. Up to that time he lies at your mercy and you are able to do with him what you please. But after death he will fall into the hands and under the authority only of Him who alone has the power to send him either to hell or to paradise."

"How now," interrupted the Huron, who served as spokesman for his fellows, "thinkest thou that for what thou sayest here, and for what thou performest in regard to this our enemy, that the Iroquois will treat thee any better should they come to ravage this our country?"

"That is not what concerns me at all," replied the Father. "All I think of now is to do that which is required of me. We, myself and all the black robes, as you speak of us, have come here only to teach you the way to heaven. As to the rest, and as to what may happen to our persons, we leave that entirely to the providence of God."

To this the Hurons were silent, while the prisoner, in the midst of his sufferings, looked inquiringly at the throng grouped around the black robes, perplexed and wondering over the respite that had been given him. The Hurons themselves had grown somewhat tired with their exertions and doubtless found some solace in a temporary change of interest.

"Why art thou sorry that we are tormenting this man?" one of them asked Brebeuf.

"I have nothing to say of your condemning him to death," answered the Father, "but chiefly of your treating him in this way."

"What then! How do the French do? Do you not kill men?"

"Yes, indeed, the French kill men, but not with the accompaniment of all this cruelty," was the answer.

"What? do you never burn anyone?"

"Sometimes, but not often," said the Father, "and even then the fire is only for enormous crimes, and there is only one person to whom this kind of execution belongs by right. And besides the condemned are not made to linger so long—often they are first strangled, and generally they are thrown at once into the fire, where they are immediately smothered and consumed."

"Where is this God of whom you speak?"

"He is everywhere. He is watching and listening to us at this very moment. But the home He has prepared for those who obey Him is in heaven where He desires that both Iroquois and Huron will dwell for ever with his angels."

"But if there are Iroquois also in this heaven of which thou speakest, of what avail would it be to us to go there? Art thou not aware of the manner in which they treat their

enemies? They would even lie in wait for us as we sought to enter."

"In heaven the Iroquois would love you more dearly than brothers, for you would all be children of God."

"Would there be game and hunting in this heaven, and dancing and feasts? Are there elk there and caribou and wild fowl? And would we be able to speak to our relatives who have died before us and who have gone to the village of souls and the happy hunting grounds?"

"You would not, for the unbaptized can never go to heaven, nor would you have any desire there for dancing and for feasting, for you would be perfectly happy without those things."

"I think that this heaven would not do for us. I would not like to go to a place where I knew nobody and where people would not give me good sagamité and beavers' tails to eat. Your heaven may be good for the French, but it would not satisfy the Hurons."

At this point some of the braves became restive.

"Come, come," they cried, "there is too much talk. The time is passing," and they turned to the victim.

By this time he had become greatly relieved by the interval of rest that had been given him, and sat upright on his mat with great composure. While the conversation with Brebeuf had been proceeding indeed, others had stopped to converse with the Iroquois. In short, the Hurons began to show that they had become satiated with their orgy and showed little disposition to resume the torment before morning. Instead they sat round and asked the prisoner questions regarding affairs in the country of the Iroquois, and he answered very readily, telling them from time to time that they were doing him a great favour by asking him

so many questions, for these in some measure diverted him from his troubles.

As day dawned they lighted fires outside the village that the Sun and the God of War might look down on the excess which was now to be open before the spirits of the earth, the water and the sky. To the chosen place of execution the victim was then led forth. Father Brebeuf walked by his side and talked to him.

"My brother," he said, "thou knowest that we feel deep sympathy with thy sufferings and we hope that that is some small consolation to thee."

"It is indeed," answered the Iroquois. "I am very grateful to thee, particularly as thou tellest me that at the end of my sufferings great joy awaiteth me."

"That is so," said Brebeuf, "providing thou endurest everything patiently to the end and offerest thy sufferings in atonement of any wrong during thy life which thou hast performed. Make it thy intention to die as a Christian."

"So have I done, since thou didst pour the cleansing water upon me, and so I desire to do to the end," said the condemned with great meekness.

"That is well," answered the Father. "Often in the midst of thy tortures there were those who made thee commit shameful acts, which at other times would have been the ruination of thy soul. All things considered thy faults in these acts were only venial, for thy will took no part in the doing of them. But ask thou pardon of God that the way may be smoothed for thee to heaven."

Meanwhile two Huron warriors took hold of their victim and made him mount a scaffold seven feet high, which some other savages ascended with him. On this platform they tied him to a tree which passed over it, leaving him enough freedom to turn round. Here they began to burn not only

his legs, which had felt most of the fire hitherto, but also all the rest of his body in the sight of all.

From time to time his torturers were supplied with new brands which they now applied to the vital parts of his body from head to foot. They thrust brands all aflame down his throat ; they applied red-hot hatchets to his shoulders, his back, his abdomen, his breast and between his thighs. His executioners stood on either side that the populace might view him, and he could dash only from one torment to another in the extremity of his pain.

When in excess of weariness he sought to crouch or sit, others under the scaffolding were there to force him to rise. The missionaries stood below, near the platform, praying with great fervour that he might soon be released from his sufferings. When he appeared to be put out of breath the savages poured water into his mouth to revive him. But he remained still, his mouth open, and his body inert.

Suddenly as the Hurons redoubled the fury of their torments a new accession of strength appeared to come to the Iroquois. His captors having released his arms for a moment, tantalizing him with a little liberty, he took in his mutilated hands a firebrand and started to defend himself, apparently coming to the determination to die fighting, which would have been great glory in a captive and great confusion for his enemies.

The unexpected action of the prisoner greatly surprised the Hurons. As he struck out at his foes with amazing courage and strength a terrible medley of cries rose out of the mob, and every man who could seize a piece of red-hot iron rushed towards the victim. But the Iroquois was nothing daunted ; he had nothing to lose and everything to gain by one supreme effort in which he might glut the vengeance of all his tribe, attaining even his freedom or quickly expiring

in a blaze of splendour. Overcoming the efforts of the men on the platform with him he hurled them to the ground and the ladders that led to the platform after them. He then hurled firebrand after firebrand into the crowd, severely burning many, while thrusting other firebrands in the direction of those who sought to approach him.

The victim had by this time become a pitiful spectacle, and was as completely at bay as any stag being torn to death by hounds. He was bathed from head to foot in blood mingled with ashes and burning cinders which broke into flame in his hair and on different parts of his body. Some under the scaffold were applying torches to his feet. The butchers had become as numerous on all sides as the spectators and he only drew back from one fire or glowing iron to be met by another.

In the midst of his last valiant fight the Iroquois missed his footing and fell backward into the crowd. At once his enemies pounced upon him, burnt him anew wherever they could reach him and finally lifted him up and threw him on the fire. But the indomitable man rose again in the centre of the flames with two flaming firebrands in his hands, and turned towards the mass of his enemies, in whose hearts fear had now plainly entered, for they asked if they were watching the exploits of a spirit and demon and not of a man.

As he walked forward his torturers drew back with the irons and firebrands in their hands. The crowd divided to let him pass and there appeared to be nobody with hardihood enough to touch him.

Then as they watched him it began to become apparent to the crowd what their prisoner was going to do and a sharp cry passed from mouth to mouth.

“He is going to burn the village.”

And this indeed, it became very clear, the Iroquois was going to try to do. The crowd had fallen back before the flaming faggots held by him and he had already gone about a hundred paces. He was approaching a cluster of cabins built of cedar bark and as inflammable as gunpowder, and there was nothing more likely than that the whole village would be consumed if he could apply the firebrands to their walls and roofs. A moment and a few paces more and he would be in the midst of them.

The dread of a calamity so humiliating roused the Hurons from their stupor. Immediately the warriors sped upon him and the powerful arm of a young brave felled the Iroquois with a club. Before he was able to rise again a dozen Hurons were upon him ; and now they proceeded to do their worst. They cut off both his hands and both his feet, and seizing the mangled body they turned it round and round and grilled it over the different fires they kept burning. Finally they thrust him under an overturned tree-trunk, all on fire, so that he might be completely roasted, and the sacrifice brought to an end.

But a spectacle more weird and uncanny than any yet seen was enacted before the eyes of the Hurons, whom the invincible prowess of their enemy was beginning to unnerve, for it was taken by them as an omen of coming fate. The Iroquois, now bereft of his feet and hands, nevertheless mustered strength enough to fight on. By a prodigious effort he rolled over in the flames and, having fallen outside the circle of the fire, looked in the direction of his enemies and then began to advance on his elbows and knees towards them. To the Hurons he had now become a spectre and had ceased to be a man, and they fled backwards before him, fearing contact with one to whom nothing remained but an untameable spirit and a last remnant of life.

This last was all they could now take from him and this they finally did. A powerful Huron, less fearful than the rest, strode towards the Iroquois and severed his head, which he threw into the crowd, where one of the warriors caught it and held it to his breast.

"Carry thou the head of the Iroquois to our captain, Ondessone," said the chief among the Old Men to the warrior with his prize. "For the head hath in the council of war been reserved for Ondessone, that he may make a feast therewith," and the warrior at once started off to Ondessone's cabin.

Then the same Old Man spoke to the Hurons standing beside the prostrate and outraged body of their victim.

"The trunk of the Iroquois, my nephews," he said, "remains, as you are aware, according to the instructions of the council of war, at Arontaen, where it hath been decreed a feast will be made of it this day."

Brebeuf and the two other Fathers turned away, worn and sick at heart. They had not gone far when they encountered a savage carrying an object on a skewer.

"What hast thou there, my brother?" asked Brebeuf, half suspecting what the object was.

"A forearm of the Iroquois, as thou seest—roasted and ready for the eating," was the reply.

But, though few things were more delicate to the stomach of a Huron than the flesh of an Iroquois, the banqueters appeared to have reached satiety before the victim was consumed; for when the Fathers awoke the next morning the muscular, contorted forearm, ringed and braceletted, lay before them on the earth-floor of their cabin.

Considering the mutilated member as belonging to an heir of the church triumphant now aureoled and enskied in the choir invisible, whom they had rescued from the

kingdom of darkness, they gave it Christian burial, appealing to heaven that the martyrdom of this first Christian among the Iroquois might be accepted on behalf of his distant kindred to the end that a path might be opened to carry light to their country in the remorseless night that engulfed them.

CHAPTER XV

TONNEROUNONT THE SORCERER

FATHER BREBEUF and his two companions were barely returned to Ihonatiria from their journey to the scene of terror at Arontaen, when Father Isaac Jogues arrived from Quebec and France. He brought with him a little French boy who had been lost on the way, and who not only communicated his sickness to Father Jogues, but had otherwise greatly weakened him by the efforts he had been obliged to undergo in carrying the boy over the numerous portages.

The Father appeared in good health on his arrival, but this was soon discovered to be an illusion produced by happiness over his advent in a land in which he had long desired to work. Within a few days of his appearance at Ihonatiria a violent fever brought him down, and this proved to be only the beginning of trouble, for before long the entire mission house had to be converted into an infirmary, in which the nurses were too few for the patients. The domestics as well as the priests were attacked one after another, so that Father Brebeuf was the only one of the religious, and François Petitpré the only one of the donnés, to remain well.

It was from the hunting of Petitpré, who was skilful with the arquebus, that the mission family had to look for all its succour. During the first days of sickness, when they had as yet no game, they had almost nothing to give their invalids but some broth of wild purslane stewed in water, with a

dash of native verjuice. These were the first potages. They had one hen also, but her gift of an egg was not an everyday affair, and when given could not go far among so many patients. The Fathers found they had first to discover who was well enough to eat the egg, and then to decide who most needed it.

The nurses and physicians, who were patients also by turns, often longed for the feather beds of France; for though Father Jogues and Father Chatellain, as well as Dominique, one of the *donnés*, were near death at the culmination of their illness, they had to rest as best they could on mats of rushes spread over cedar bark, with only a piece of elk or beaver skin or a threadbare blanket thrown over them.

An additional trial was the continual coming and going and uninterrupted noise within and without the cabin. For there was no available means of discouraging the visits and importunities of the savages, who talked incessantly in clamorous, blustering voices and who could not be induced to see any reason for speaking low. One day, when Dominique was at the crisis of his illness, Father Lemer cier sought to caution a savage who came yelling at the top of his voice into the mission house.

"My friend, I pray thee, speak a little lower."

But the Huron saw no reason for a change in his habit.

"Thou hast no sense," he said to the priest. "There is a bird," speaking of the cock that strutted at the door, "that talks louder than I do, and thou sayest nothing to him."

The savages as they trooped in wondered at the order the black robes observed in caring for their sick and the diet they made them observe. It was a curious thing for them; for, though sickness was rampant among the Hurons themselves,

they had until then never seen French people ill. Tonner ounont, one of the most famous medicine men in the country, having heard that the black robes were sick, was among those who paid a visit to the mission house. The Fathers could not help looking at him as they listened to the large words that came from his mouth and the immense description he gave of himself and his powers.

He was a little hunchback of unpleasing aspect, extremely misshapen, with one half of his head shaven and on the other side his black, oily hair done up in a fearsome coiffure. He was ochred and painted in green and black and red, and all he wore apart from his breech-clout and ornaments was a robe of bear skin over his shoulders, patched and greasy. He carried on his arms bracelets that jingled and in his ears pendants of the whorls of the pink conch and small copper discs.

Father Pijart, in from a round of visits to the surrounding villages, had already met the sorcerer, and told the rest of his repute.

"This savage is one of the oracles of the whole country," he said. "He boasts of making entire towns bend to his decrees. He is in Ihonatiria to blow on some of the sick people around us."

The little sorcerer stepped over the threshold and made the round of the sick beds, with a troop of savage henchmen at his heels. Then he addressed Father Brebeuf, who had taken on himself the care of the whole house, and who not only used the lancet on the patients and acted generally as physician, but carried the wood and water and did the cooking.

"My brother," he said, "I had almost left Ihonatiria without coming to see thee, not doubting that the French, who are wise in so many things, would also be possessed of

remedies that would guard them against the demons of the pest ; but Tsiouendaentaha, who loves thee, hath spoken to me concerning the black robes, and I have come the more willingly as I look on you as relatives of my dead brother, on whom thou didst pour the waters of Him who made all, when the winter moon was still over us."

"Thou art welcome in our cabin," replied the Superior.

"That is well," returned the sorcerer. "I am not, as thou mayest perceive, of the common run of men. I am also, as it were, a spirit and a demon as the black robes are reputed to be ; and therefore I have never been sick. In the three or four times that the country of the Hurons hath been visited with the contagion carried by the invisible demons of the air and night, I did not trouble myself about it at all. I never feared the disease, for I am in possession of remedies known only to myself that protect me against all harm. Hence if thou wilt give me that which I require I undertake in a few days to set all thy invalids upon their feet."

"What desirest thou," asked Brebeuf, "that we should give to thee?"

"Thou and thy brothers," answered the medicine man, "will give me ten glass beads, and one extra for each patient."

The Superior remained silent awhile, thinking it possible that the sorcerer might be familiar with some natural remedies.

"As for the number and the quality of the gifts which thou requirest that we should give to thee," he then said, "thou needst not trouble thyself, for to us it is a matter of little consequence. The efficacy of thy remedies, concerning which we are chiefly concerned, clearly does not depend on that."

"That is so," answered the sorcerer.

"Moreover, it is evident that thou wouldst always be beginning over again, seeing that the number of patients continues to increase from day to day, so that we have little doubt we would be able to satisfy thee."

"That is very well," said Tonnerounont. "I will unveil to thee the roots of the woods that must be used by thee; and beyond these, that the proper cure may be greatly expedited, I will, if the black robes so desire, make use of the powers which I alone possess. I also will pray, as do the black robes, I will have a special sweat in which great visions will be vouchsafed to me. I will dance and commune with the animals in the secret recesses of the forest and exercise the potency of my drum and rattle. In three days thou canst rest assured every one of thy sick people will be cured."

The Father listened courteously but at the end shook his head.

"Tonnerounont," he said, "thou must understand we could not approve of that sort of remedy. The prayers thou speakest of offering would avail us nothing, for it would only be a compact with the powers of darkness, considering that thou hast no knowledge of, or belief in, the true God, to whom alone it is permitted to address vows and prayers. But as far as thy natural remedies are concerned, we will willingly employ them, and thou wilt oblige us by teaching us what thou knowest concerning them."

"That will I do willingly," replied the sorcerer. And he named two roots which he said were very efficacious in cases of fever and instructed the Father how to make concoctions from them. However, he was not pleased that the Father had rejected the use of his art, which he maintained was far beyond that of common medicine men.

And then he turned round and addressed all within hearing. "You shall know of my genealogy and be thus able

to judge for yourselves if Tonnerounont belongs to the common run of men. Give me your ears a moment."

The savages gathered round him, and Tonnerounont, after giving a sidelong glance at the tall Brebeuf and the other Frenchmen present, began to hold forth.

"Be it known to you all that Tonnerounont is in no sense an ordinary man, but a demon from the invisible world come into this. My introduction into this world of men was not by the road along which other men have come, for in days gone by I dwelt under the earth in the long house of the demons, and lived and moved as they did.

"But the fancy came to me that I also should become a man, for the spirit of wandering is strong within me, and this is how I contrived that so it should happen. For having heard one day, in my subterranean abode, the voices and cries of children high upon the visible earth, who were guarding the crops of the summer time and were chasing the animals and the birds away, I resolved that I also would leave the abode of gloom and darkness, whence the spring waters come up on the ground, and ascend also to the air and the light of the earth and sky. No sooner had I issued from under the ground than I encountered a woman, whom I saw but in whose eyes I dwelt under a pall of invisibility.

"Craftily I entered into her womb and there I assumed a little body, and I had borne with me from the underworld a little she-devil even smaller than I was and she accompanied me and did the same thing. As soon as we were both about the size of two ears of corn, the woman desired to be delivered of her fruit, knowing well that she had not conceived by human means, and fearing that the demons and oki within her might do her some harm. So she sought means of hastening her time. Doth not all this sound strange and wonderful to you?"

The savages signalized their assent. "Haaw! haaw! haaw!" they grunted.

"Now it is recalled to me that in the meantime," the sorcerer went on, "being ashamed to see myself followed by a girl, and fearing that she might afterwards be taken by others for my wife, I beat her so hard that I left her for dead; in very truth she came dead into this world of men. The woman, being delivered of us, took us both, wrapped us in a beaver skin, and carried us deep into the woods. There she placed us in the hollow of an ancient poplar tree and there abandoned us.

"We remained there until one night a warrior of the Attignenonaghac passed the poplar tree in which I dwelt with the body of my sister, when I immediately began to weep and cry out that he might hear me. He did indeed give ear to me, and peered into the recesses of the tree as my voice directed him, and there he saw me shedding many tears and stretching forth my arms. He did not at once rescue me, perceiving at once that I was not like the other children of men, but ran and carried the news to all the village near by. Then it was that my mother came and took me again, and reared me in her cabin such as you see me."

"Haaw! haaw! haaw!" came the aspiration from the savage audience in token of its appreciation, while Tonnerounont looked towards the black robes to observe if they had been properly impressed.

"You must all know also," he went on, speaking this time with great authority and stretching forth his medicine wand, "that in my youth, since I was of a form and mien different from that of the rest of mankind, crowds of children were in the habit of following me, and making war upon me, and holding me up to ridicule, but I revenged myself by causing a great many of them to die. But after I had killed

a great multitude I decided within myself that henceforth I should endure this discomfort,' for I perceived that in my anger I might ruin the land of the Hurons and kill all."

Thereupon Tonnerounont withdrew, followed by his retinue of wondering savages, not a little satisfied at finding the French, though greatly famed as oki and medicine men even to the borders of the Attiwandarons, beyond the lake of the Iroquois, and of the Tionnontatehronons, on the road to the Great Water, should fall victims to a disease which his own great powers could heartily despise.

CHAPTER XVI

MAGIC OF THE BLACK ROBES

BY the middle of October, when the patients at the mission house were out of danger, Brebeuf and the other Fathers were at liberty to visit the sick savages in Ihonatiria and the villages around, calling both morning and evening, happy that the hunting season was not over so that they could bring them a little wild-fowl, a luxury rare among the Hurons.

The prunes and raisins and senna and other little remedies which they were able to dispense produced results which dazzled the whole country. The contagion had begun to spread in a manner which caused great alarm both at Ihonatiria and Ossossane, and the Old Men, who had seen the havoc caused by former epidemics, sought the Superior of the mission that he might join with the people in such spiritual exercises as might drive the birds of ill omen elsewhere.

The Fathers had hoped that the first frosts of winter would arrest the progress of the malady, but it was the opposite that happened, and the depth of winter was coincident with the greatest number of sick and the extreme gravity of the disease. The Fathers laid aside every other possible care to attend the invalids who needed them, but the savages had recourse only to their medicine men, paying out presents from their slender resources for all sorts of bizarre

remedies. Tonnerounont was conspicuously active among the medicine men, declaring that the entire country was sick and that the entire country would have to do his bidding if it wanted to get well.

"Tonnerounont hath prescribed a remedy by which to drive away the malady. All the young men in all the four nations of the Hurons will play a game of Crosse to propitiate the demons. So it hath been revealed to Tonnerounont that all will again be well," it was proclaimed through all the villages. Thereupon the captains saw to it that the behest was executed, and the young men ran themselves breathless with their balls and rackets.

To Onnentisati, his native town, the hunchback sorcerer was signally generous in his benedictions.

"Rest you all assured," he told the villagers. "Tonnerounont hath decreed that in the village whither he chose to come when he left the house of the demons, not one shall be permitted to be sick. The power which Tonnerounont exercises as demon over the maladies of lesser demons will be a shield large as the sky over you all."

And great indeed was the jubilation in Onnentisati, the boast, everywhere regarded as a true prophecy, being published through all the four nations, and causing deep melancholy elsewhere. But a few days afterwards there were also many sick in Onnentisati, among whom several died.

In time the Hurons, in grave apprehension, and seeking the source of their woes, turned their eyes, as on other occasions, towards the little French colony in their midst. Dark rumours concerning the black robes began to be mouthed through all the towns of the confederacy, and the little medicine man was not slow in fomenting the general distrust of rivals who had shown themselves possessed of a

ritual and a liturgy so much more impressive than his own. As he went blowing and shaking his tortoise-shell rattle over one patient after another, he proclaimed in all the cabins visited by him that, during a ceremonial sweat, in which great visions had been vouchsafed to him, he had seen the malady, in the form of a giant serpent, coming from the direction of the lake where Ihonatiria lay.

One Entaraha said to the Father Superior : " The porcelain collar of twelve hundred beads which thou didst present in general council last year on the occasion of the Feast of the Dead, is now regarded by the people as the cause of their death, since thou didst say to us that thou madest the present not for the dead, according to our custom, but to smooth the way to heaven for the living, which it is now doing for many."

Later Tonnerounont at Ossossane came out boldly and directly accused the black robes of being the cause of the epidemic. It was the universal sentiment in Ihonatiria, he said, that when the sick were getting better the black robes gave them food that made them die.

But Father Brebeuf happened to walk into Ossossane when the sorcerer was active there and immediately confronted him.

" My brother," said the Superior to him, " I do not desire to believe it of thee. Is it true that thou hast accused the French of spreading this sickness ? "

" No, it is not true," was the reply. " All that I have said was that in the autumn I beheld the sickness come from the direction of the lake in the form of a powerful demon. I did not say I knew the cause of it."

In reply to a reproof from the Father he merely gave the usual savage answer : " You have your ways, and we have ours."

Then talk of a great cloak was bandied from mouth to mouth, poisoned, it was said, by the French, and intended to envelop the whole country. One of the captains, Aenons, who had never ceased urging Father Brebeuf to make his abode in his village of Wenrio, brought a report from the Allumette Islands, in the Grand River of the Ottawas, half way to Quebec, that Champlain, the great captain, had died with the determination of returning to ruin them all. The Fathers found that after they had reduced their diet to a minimum that they might have food for the sick, there were some who repeated to them the accusation of bringing them sweetmeats doctored to make them die. Others, observing the Fathers skimming the grease from the soup prepared for them, proclaimed that they were under no obligation to them.

"If you do give us something, it is only what you would have thrown away, reserving the best for yourselves," they said, for grease, though even by them regarded as injurious to the sick, was a luxury among the savages. Regarding the kettle of the Jesuits, which was on the fire night and day for the sick, the savages present in the mission house would say, "It is only to accumulate a great deal of grease." And seeing that the Fathers remained in good health though in continual contact with the sick and dying, they would say, "These people are demons, and not men."

Town after town was visited by the malady, and the savages, in a panic, turned from one method of protection to another, sometimes appealing to the demons of the air from the tops of their cabins, at other times turning to the God of the Christians. Wenrio, a league from Ihonatiria, seeing itself assailed, called a council of chief men, to which they invited Father Brebeuf. The Old Men sat in a circle before

the light of the fire in the cabin of Aenons, the young men gathering in the outer rim in the shadow.

One of the Old Men stood up and stretched out his arms in the direction of the Jesuit.

"Tell us," he said, "what we must do that the God of the French, of whom you speak, may have compassion on us. Our own remedies have proved of no avail."

The Father had no easy message for them and he delivered it with less of confidence in the change of soul it might effect than he formerly cherished. At the very best he looked forward to a great deal of savage rhetoric and promises for the future, which in the case of most would remain completely unfulfilled.

"My brothers," he said, passing his eyes over the gloomy rings of naked, painted men, "I would that I might have some easy way for you, but it is not permitted to me to abate by one jot or tittle the message that has been handed down among Christians, generation to generation, from immemorial time. My message to you is first this, and this is the principal matter among all, that you must believe in the God who made all and keep His commandments. This you cannot do unless you are willing to renounce the numerous customs and superstitions, to which you have become so accustomed that they are part of your lives."

"To what customs do you refer?" asked one of the Old Men.

"I shall refer simply to the most prominent among them," answered the missionary. "For one thing you ought to give up your faith in dreams, for belief in these delusions of the brain is not only wrong, but simple folly. For to you the dictate of a dream is like the command of a god, and if a dream says one thing, and a captain says another, the

captain may shout his head off, but you will follow the direction of a dream, even if it inclines you to murder. That is both wrong and foolish."

At this point the speaker held his peace for a moment in the expectation that the savages would give some sign of assent or dissent; but they merely sat like statues, no one opening his mouth.

Then he went on.

"I now come to another matter, which is extremely important, and which some of you will consider very hard; but hard or not it will be required from you. You must all observe conjugal chastity. You must give up your habit of abandoning one wife and taking another according to your whims, and in this matter the women are even more abandoned than the men. The Christian rule is that you should have only one wife, and that marriages should be binding as long as both the man and woman live."

There was a stir among the savages at this point and even some angry murmuring, but Brebeuf continued to hold forth in the same strong, even, authoritative tone.

"You must understand also that it is forbidden to you to engage in these horrible vomiting feasts, where men degrade themselves lower than the animals. There is no animal of the forest that is not satisfied when his stomach is full, without going through all the process of eating again. It is moreover forbidden to you to eat human flesh. It is forbidden moreover that you continue these mating parties and feasts which you call Aoutaeroi, which you hold in obedience to your dreams and at the command of sorcerers, to appease the demon whom you call by that name. I blush to speak more clearly.

"Those are the things that are prohibited to you. But in

addition it will be well that you follow the example of your brethren of Ihonatiria, who have agreed to build a little chapel in the spring where all may assemble to render their thanks, if in the providence of God this malady passes from you."

The Hurons listened to the Superior with close attention, but when he closed the familiar "Haaw! haaw! haaw!" of assent was absent, and instead there was considerable murmuring among them. At last, Onaconchiaronk, one of the oldest of the sagamores, who had before appealed to Brebeuf, rose to speak.

"My nephew," he said, "thou hast astonished us greatly. We have been very much deceived. We had thought that the God of whom thou speakest would be satisfied if we built a chapel in His honour, and this we would have been willing to do. But according to what thou sayest He asks a great deal more. There will have to be great thought, great consideration, and many councils of our captains, before we will know how to answer thee."

Then Aenons, who was well known to the French both at Quebec and in the country of the Hurons, addressed the Superior.

"Echon," he said, "I must speak to thee with perfect candour. I consider that the things thou proposest are quite impossible. It was said to thee last year in Ihonatiria that the people of that village believed in what thou didst teach. But the truth is they said they believed only to procure tobacco from thee. And that did not please me at all.

"For my part, I am attached to thee, and I am no dissembler. I express to thee my sentiments with frankness. I consider that what thou proposest will be impossible of fulfilment by the Hurons and will prove only a stumbling

block. Thou must remember that we have our own ways of doing things, and the French have theirs. When thou speakest to us about obeying and acknowledging as our master the God who thou sayest has made heaven and earth, it sounds to me as though thou wert seeking to overthrow the country, to introduce strange customs in place of those known to us and our fathers. Thy ancestors in ancient times acted as our ancestors acted. They held their councils, and sat round their camp fires, and there they resolved to take as their God Him whom thou honourest, and ordained all the ceremonies that thou observest. As for us, our ancestors did the same, and the customs we follow we have inherited from them."

The Father replied at length, and with great force, for he was well aware that the intelligence of the savages was high, and they demanded a reason for everything. He had the satisfaction of finding Onaconchiaronk on his side in the end, and though the rest of the company at first hung their heads and turned deaf ears to him, the combined eloquence of both brought it about that a verbal agreement was given to what the Father required. All appeared favourable to Brebeuf as he left for Ihonatiria, promising to return to them at once.

But news was soon brought to the mission house that the old customs had been renewed. In Ihonatiria and Wenrio, even those regarded as catechumens were donning their masks and dancing to the call of the demons of the air that they might carry away the disease. The very men who had been loudest in calling themselves Christians and brothers of the French were masters of ceremonies at the ancient rites. The black robes to them were simply wiser sorcerers than their own. Even as they returned from their devil dances and their nocturnal revels, masked and feathered and ochred

as from a carnival, they would call on the Fathers, asking, " My brothers, when do we assemble to pray ? "

The Fathers would merely tell them they were jesting. Day by day it was being borne in on them that only by a miracle could a transformation be accomplished in the midst of this primitive and obdurate people dwelling in a donjon land ruled by demons from the beginning of the world.

CHAPTER XVII

ACCUSATION AND EXCULPATION

THE plague of smallpox did not abate, but increased from day to day, and in the atmosphere of terror and despair Father Brebeuf saw deepening and increasing also the flow of suspicion against himself and the other Frenchmen and black robes.

It was true indeed that the pest in its grave form brought down its victims first at Ihonatiria, which was the port of entry from Quebec and the great river of St. Lawrence. It was true also that the family of the mission house had been afflicted before the malady became serious throughout the rest of the country. It was even true that Father Jogues, who was the first victim, might have brought the infection with him. All this did not escape the shrewd observation of the savages, and the most was made of it.

But in addition it was noted that many children had died after the sacramental water of the black robes had been poured over them. It was said that some of the patients, who had not been so very ill, died after they had eaten of the pottage and the wild-fowl which the black robes had brought them. It was incomprehensible to the Hurons that Father Brebeuf and the others should be willing to travel indefatigably around the country, accepting no gifts, but on the contrary giving all they had, wearing themselves out in going from one cabin to another, except for a motive such as prompted the Iroquois to face capture

and death in order to ravage and slay. To the savages every disease was a form of poisoning and as the accusations swelled in volume the Hurons grew more and more of the belief that the Frenchmen had a hand in the widespread malady.

The suspicion in time resolved itself into threats in the cabins, in the councils, along the lonely forest trails, and around the fire of the mission house itself. Missiles were slung, and gleaming tomahawks were raised more than once above the heads of the Fathers, and mutterings were heard of burning, of banquets of white flesh, and of the splitting of heads.

Fire and flame were on one occasion cast in the face of one of the Fathers in open feast. One Taretande, a captain of Ihonatiria, who was responsible for that outrage, publicly accused the Fathers as beyond doubt the authors of the plague, and declared openly to them that if anyone in his cabin should die he would split the head of the first Frenchman he should meet. Another, Achioantaete, who had made a show of being friendly, declared at that same feast that were he master of the country, it would soon be all over with the black robes. But Aenons, who on repeated occasions had championed the Fathers, advised a little more caution.

"Thou dealest, my good Achioantaete, with a very dangerous matter," he reminded that rash speaker. "Seekest thou the destruction and ruin of the country? If the Hurons should remain two years without going down to Quebec, in what condition would they find themselves? They would be reduced to such extremity that they would consider themselves fortunate to be permitted to join with the Algonquins of the Island and to embark in their canoes."

That quieted Achioantaete, but the fiery Taretande was not so easily subdued. He was a powerful savage of ferocious mien. After the council and the feast he walked with his brother, Sononkhiaconc, into the mission house and there threatened the Fathers also.

"You are sorcerers," he said, "worthy of death, for you are responsible for all the deaths in the country. We have resolved to get rid of you, and if no other way can be found, it has been decided to embark every one of you in the spring and send you back to Quebec."

Rumours reached the Fathers of evil acts that might at any hour be perpetrated on one or all. They could hear the children outside the cabins railing at them as at persons who were doomed to have their heads split and the cabin burnt over them. One Sunday when the savages heard the black robes chanting Vespers and the Litany they gathered outside to listen to the manner in which the French wept and cried before going to their death.

Taretande and his whole family had long been conspicuous among those who had shown hostility to the French. Occasionally he and his brothers were present at the catechisms in the mission house, but, in the view of the Fathers, only to get tobacco and afterwards to laugh among themselves over what they had heard. They did not hesitate to tell the Fathers that they looked on them as unscrupulous purveyors of falsehood, to which they gave no credence whatever. They loved nothing better than an argument and poured ridicule on Christian theology.

"Hast thou not said to us more than once," said Sononkhiaconc, younger brother of Taretande, and totally under the other's influence, "that the French and the Hurons have the same God, creator of the earth of the French as well as

the earth of the Hurons and Algonquins and Iroquois, and that we had all descended from the same father ? ”

“ That is so,” answered Father Brebeuf.

“ Now then, if that is so,” went on the other, “ who was it that brought us to this country ? How could we have crossed so many seas in our little bark canoes ? Why, is it not perfectly clear that the least wind would have engulfed us, or that we would at least have died of hunger at the end of four or five days ? And if that is so, how comes it about that we have not known how to make knives and clothes as well as you ? ”

Arguments of that sort were only a small part of their extravagances, for their mockery and hostility, in which they sought the co-operation of others, took the form of acts as well as of words. But it appeared to the Fathers that the justice of Heaven exercised towards that family of obdurate unbelievers took a remarkable form. For they had seen other cabins infected with the plague without being sensible of any anxiety as to their own, and walked with their heads high, while others were stricken around them as if they were made of a different clay.

Then suddenly the scourge fell heavily upon them, and three of them fell sick at the same time. The first to fall was the mother. She had become a Christian and had recanted, seeking always to quarrel with the Fathers, who visited her cabin with great repugnance, where they sought to teach the little ones.

Then came the turn of Sononkhiaconc, in whom at the point of death the Fathers sought for a change of heart ; but he died uttering blasphemies. Father Lemer cier and Father Garnier later went to see Taretande. They found him sitting upright on his mat, in the fashion of the savages, milder in speech than he had formerly been. They

then left, not expecting that he would die so soon, but when they returned he was in the agonies of death, dying as he had lived.

Meanwhile the sorcerer, Sondacouane, rival of Tonnerounont, after a fast of seven days and frequent communion with the demons who were masters of the pest, in which he wrestled victoriously with them, ordered a great feast of white dog as a means of drawing the sickness away. It was also given forth that those who desired to be delivered entirely from the disease by the January moon should hang over the doorways of their cabins large masks in union with figures and representations of men and women.

The command was immediately obeyed. Within fewer than forty-eight hours in Onnentisati and in many of the communities around, giant multi-coloured dolls and scarecrows and rude images of men sat on the roofs of all the cabins and gibbered in the night air. Some of the people in addition hung the grotesque figures on poles by the cabin fire. Some carried them around as tutelary companions.

In several cabins the Witches' Sabbaths known as the Aoutaeroi feasts could be heard going on night after night. There naked women sang and danced with wild abandon, while the men struck violently with arrows and sticks against the bark walls to scare the demons who tormented their sick. At the same time others took embers and red-hot cinders in their bare hands and made motions over the stomachs of their patients, who tossed like maniacs from side to side.

In Ihonatiria however wiser counsels had begun to prevail and the captains came to the conclusion that the Fathers had been greatly wronged. All had been impressed by the fate that had fallen on the family of Taretande, who had been the arrogant bull of the herd among the infidels of the

Nation of the Bear, and who had now been taken away, while the black robes, whose throats he had so often threatened to cut and whose cabin he had so often threatened to burn down, walked about alive and well.

The chief men of the village assembled and invited the Father Superior to the council. He found both the old men and the young men very crestfallen and very humble, and full of apologies towards the Fathers. Aenons, a captain who divided his time between Ihonatiria and Wenrio, and who was always on good terms with Father Brebeuf, made a long speech, in which he sought to convey the feelings of all his fellow townsmen.

"Echon," he concluded, holding out his arms to the Superior, "I entreat thee in the name of all our captains and all our young men to think no more of what has passed and no longer to take account of the evil designs which certain rash men have had on your lives or to reveal those designs to the French authorities at Quebec. All realize now that they have been greatly mistaken and are very sorry for it."

Then Father Brebeuf replied.

"My brothers," he said, "I very willingly accept the apologies which you make, and forgive you all from my heart. I do not blame you so much as I regret the circumstances which have driven you temporarily to take so unfavourable a view of the motives of those who have left their own country, and who have surrendered all, to come here and assist you. As to the threats that have been made against our lives, that concerns us very little. Already before we left France we had dedicated and laid our lives on the altar of sacrifice. The thought of death, in whatever form, does not terrify any of us at all, and indeed there is many a time when death would appear nothing short of a happy release

from a life in a land so different from our own and in which the labour so often appears to surpass the limits of endurance of which human beings are capable. These things are only lesser evils.

"What more deeply affects us is that so many of you should show your hearts so obdurate, failing in your fidelity to the God who made you, and not taking care to resort to His infinite goodness in your afflictions. It grieves us greatly that you should rather put your faith in the foolish fancies of sorcerers, magicians, and medicine men, who delude you for their own interests and are continually demanding presents from your slender resources and compelling you to indulge in all sorts of extravagances, feasts, devil dances, and insane exhibitions, in the name of demons, who can be of no help to you whatever in your sickness."

"Alas, Echon," answered Aenons, "what wilt thou? Thou knowest our brains are in a turmoil with our sufferings."

And then one of the Old Men got up and spoke.

"My nephew," he said to Father Brebeuf, "we do not know what we are about, for the malady is gaining on us every day, and we have no knowledge whence it comes."

"It is partly due to your way of living," said Brebeuf. "That is the opinion of the French who have not suffered from it as you do. It is very hard to find its source, and there the French are as much at sea as you are."

"It would be very hard for us to change our mode of living," went on the Old Man, "for it is the mode of living which we have learnt from our ancestors, and we know of no other. Neither do we know of any certain remedy for the disease, but are forced to try one treatment after another in the hope that one may help. Often the spirits speak to us

in dreams and inspire us to do things, which we would not think of ourselves during the day. That is their manner of guiding our lives."

"But how are you to distinguish between dreams?" asked Brebeuf. "One man may have one kind of dream, and another another kind, and both may be directly opposite. They cannot both be true. A dream is a mere hallucination in the brain, to which no attention should be paid at all."

"It is the only way of getting counsel outside ourselves," answered the Old Man. "There is nothing we would not do, whether told to us in dreams or by the sorcerers, to preserve our lives. The life in the other world of which thou speakest may be very good, but we have to die to get there. This is the only life we really know, and we want to stay here with our families as long as we can."

"There is nothing wrong in desiring happiness in this life," said the Father, "but it behoves all to think also of the life to come, which, being eternal, while this life is only transitory, is much more important than the other. We are here to instruct you and to seek your happiness not only in this life but in the life to come."

"That is very well," answered the Old Man. "But we have to think of this life first, to see that we have plenty to eat, to feel well, to fish, and to play in the field, to raise crops, and to go to war and to the chase. Can we do these things in heaven? Are there fields of grain and forests there?"

"There are not," answered the Father. "Such things you will not need there, for you will be perfectly happy without them."

"I do not think we could be happy in a place in which we would not be able to do the things we have always done.

Nor do we think it a good thing to be so idle. Hast thou not said that the Iroquois would also be in paradise along with the Hurons ? ”

“ That is so,” answered the Father. “ Paradise is open to all worthy to be received there.”

Here the Old Man consulted one of his companions and then continued.

“ Well, let me tell thee, Echon, we are all very sorry that thou shouldst have shown so much sympathy for the Iroquois prisoner, whom we lately burnt at Arontaen, and that thou shouldst have poured water upon him, and baptized him, and made him a Christian. Knowest thou not that if he is now in paradise, as thou hast told us, he will be lying in wait for us there, ready to kill the Hurons and drive them away, should they attempt to enter ? ”

“ That could not possibly be, for there is no war in Paradise, which is entirely a place of peace.”

“ That is not our belief. We think that in the hunting grounds and the village of souls, to which our ancestors have gone, the souls of the dead make war among themselves just as among the living.”

“ When you are properly instructed you will have right ideas both about this world and the world to come.”

“ It is this world we are most interested in. Echon, we love thee and believe thou meanest well to us, though sometimes we think thou hast desired to smooth the road to paradise to us, not out of hate, but out of love for us. But we desire to remain among the living as long as we can. And if it is required of us to dance all day, and to feast and dance all night, to propitiate the demons of the air and to drive away the disease, I myself, all decrepit as thou seest me to be, will be the first to begin and if need be the last to end in order to save the lives of my children.”

At that moment messengers brought news to the council that Tehorehaegnon, noted sorcerer of the town of Andiatæ, had promised health, wealth, and wonders to everybody in return for a large kettle and belt of wampum, and a ceremonial feast in his honour of spotted dog, to be followed by a mystic mating party and demon dance.

A large dog of the required mixture of colour was procured immediately and cast alive, weighted with red-hot stones, into the kettle. The Old Men joined with the young men in donning their masks and dancing round the fire. The young women and the most noted coryphées, adorned with porcelain ornaments and wild flowers, were called in to swell the wild chorus. The Grand Masters went from one wild celebration to another, walking through the revelling crowds and fanning one side and then another with wings of the wild turkey.

Brebeuf and the other Frenchmen in the mission house could hear in the small hours from their pallets of bark and boughs the fierce war-whoops, the piping of the women, the monotonous drum beat, and the circling of moccasined feet. In the morning they found attached to the cross that stood before their door the left paw of the spotted dog and a grotesque multi-beribboned human-like figure of straw.

Once again it was borne in on them through what a jungle of savage superstition they had yet to fight their way towards the light that dawned on the Christian citadel.

As they thought in moments of weakness of the horrors of the way that separated them from France and the perils and tribulations that encompassed them in a darkness deeper than the gloom of starless night, the young priests, worn on a rack that never yielded, dreaming of black forests that stood like immense precipices in a donjon of the demons, of dark recesses alive with panther eyes on every side, had

to be forgiven for many a wild inner cry, that would not be stilled, for a quick release even by way of the sepulchre of ravenous wild beast or skulking Iroquois. To few of them, yearning to do and to suffer, had their anticipatory vision of primordial savagery worn anything like the lineaments of the reality they were destined to see.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE BEWITCHERY OF TEHORENHAEGNON

THE epidemic, in the more virulent form it had assumed, spread to the south-east from Ihonatiria like a fan, and news reaching the mission house that the plague had begun to rage violently at Ossossane, Father Brebeuf hastened to bring relief, taking with him Father Isaac Jogues and one of the *donnés* recently arrived, Mathurin, who was skilled with the lancet. It was in the middle of January when they set out one morning before dawn, and the snow lay several feet thick on the ground.

Swinging forward on their savage snowshoes they arrived after some hours at the town of Wenrio, where they ministered to a number of sick, all of whom were willing to be bled and to accept the raisins and prunes of the long gowns, but not one of whom would listen to a word about anything that would be of use to them in the world to come and not in this. From Wenrio Brebeuf and his companions went on to Ossossane, where they found the savages in a panic and the demons let loose.

The bewitchery of Tehoreنهاegnon, great captain among the medicine men and old antagonist of Father Brebeuf, was being practised there also in orisons and nocturnal vigils, and delegations were being sent to the temple of boughs by the sea where the demons, during a fast of thirteen days, were revealing to him secret remedies for the malady that was mowing them down.

"Have pity on our miseries, O Tehorenhægnon. Deign to visit our sick and extend to them the remedies which the spirits have revealed to thy eyes," was the humble message which the chief men had carried from the great councils of the metropolis.

But similar messages, accompanied by presents, were going to Tehorenhægnon from all the towns and villages not only of the Nation of the Bear, but of the Nation of the Rock, the Arendarrhonons, the Ataronchronons, and the Attignenon-aghac, also, by the inland waters of Wentaron.

It was not possible for the great prophet and associate of the demons to appear in person even at Ossossane, but he commissioned as representative one of his disciples, Saossarinon, to whom he communicated all his power and authority and inspired knowledge, in visible token of which he invested him with his veneered and seasoned birch bow with bowstrings of the sinews of the mountain lion, his rawhide bowstring guard, and his painted and fur-trimmed quiver with thirteen mystic arrows, horn-tipped, polished and feathered shafts from the eldest branch of the oak.

Saossarinon descended on the Attignaouentan capital, holding the mystic bow aloft in his left hand, the wrist of which was held by the beaded rawhide guard. Under the quiver of cedar wood slung behind him, a huge dressed bear-skin, scarlet dyed and carrying geometric figures, billowed as he walked, the lifelike head, with great staring eyes, gazing over his left shoulder at the savage spectators. As he strode forward the chief captain of Ossossane proclaimed in a loud voice throughout the capital city that all was now going to be well.

"Take courage, my brothers, you who are sick as well as you whom the malady has spared. Tehorenhægnon has himself promised to drive away the disease. He has not

come in person, but Saossarinon has been sent to us by him, with complete power to give us all manner of satisfaction." Then Saossarinon sat in council, where in and out of the circle of the Old Men great wolfish dogs were twisting their way, and communicated to the supreme matured wisdom and valour of the Nation of the Bear the inspired message from Tehorenyaegnon, channel between the demons and the visible world, which he had been delegated to carry to them.

"It hath been decreed by Tehorenyaegnon, captain of the demons, that you shall celebrate for three consecutive days three consecutive feasts with many ceremonials, in consideration of which it hath been revealed that all who shall be present and faithfully carry out the details of the ritual prescribed to you, will be completely protected from the disease."

That night the people assembled in the largest cabin and caravanserai of the capital, where already Fathers Brebeuf and Jogues, and Mathurin, the *engagé*, had taken up their abode. The Frenchmen were somewhat surprised as the feathered and painted tribesmen trooped silently in, their bark dish and spoon in one hand, their masks and clubs and tomahawks in the other. And though they expected to be anything but edified, they determined to stay and to look on.

The opening ceremony took place not in the cabin, but on the roof outside. Thither one of the captains ascended after the sun had gone down and addressed the demons of the night who assembled at that hour to begin their orgies.

"Come now, O Demons whom Tehorenyaegnon hath invoked, look at the people of Ossossane here assembled. Harken to our words and desires; behold we are about to

make a great feast and a ceremonial dance in your honour. Come now, let the contagion cease and leave this town; and if you still have a desire to eat human flesh, repair you to the country of the Iroquois, our enemies, and satisfy your hunger there. If you will do that, O Demons, we will associate ourselves with you in the enterprise, and carry the sickness to them and ruin them."

This harangue being ended, the savage songs burst forth, and Saossarinon made the round of the sick in all the cabins. During his absence the savages sang uproariously, and kept time by beating violently on pieces of bark, sometimes squatting on the ground, at other times rising and dancing as if their lives depended on it. The feast was timed to begin on the return of Saossarinon, but the sick were numerous and the night passed before he returned. At length they began to sing :

"Come, come, great Arendiwane, come,
Behold the day begins to dawn."

On his arrival a profound silence was enjoined. A tall captain walked before him holding in one hand the great bow of Tehorenhaegnon and in the other a kettle filled with mystic water with which he sprinkled the sick. As for Saossarinon himself, the delegate medicine man carried a large turkey's wing, with which he fanned the company gravely and at a distance, after having given each something to drink. Then, after having inspired the company with courage and great hope, he solemnly withdrew.

The feast then took place, the tribesmen making up for their long wait by eating ravenously. When they had done, they left the place vacant for the coming of the squaws and maidens. These trooped in and sang and danced with as much energy as the men. But they did not bring their bark

dishes and bark spoons with them, for feast they had none.

At the end of the feasting it was computed amid great rejoicing that a dozen persons had been cured by the visiting physician, and Andahiach, leading captain in Ossossane, rendered public thanks to Saossarinon and his master, Tehorenyaegnon, in union with the captains of the town of Andiatæ, from which the delegate sorcerer had directly come.

In token of his appreciation, and for the better protection of the capital of the Nation of the Bear, Saossarinon invested one Khioutenstia with the subsidiary authority of Tehorenyaegnon, communicating to him some of the lesser secrets of his art and magic power, placing in his right hand the mystical turkey's wing, the fanning of which by circular motions through the air would ensure that his dreams would come true.

It was decided that a commission should report at the end of five days the number of cures effected by Tehorenyaegnon's power. The number of sick was found equal to the number of cured, and these Saossarinon was invited to cure also. But at Andiatæ he issued orders that the sick should drag themselves to him, since he could not go to them, and some who attempted to do this died. Other deaths followed among the cures, and the credit of Saossarinon sank so low that Khioutenstia, delegate of the delegated physician, and Iandatassa, whom Khioutenstia had delegated also, both threw aside their mystic turkey wings, symbols of their delegated authority, and renounced their office.

A fortnight later, after Father Brebeuf had left Ossossane, and Fathers Lemercier and Pijart had arrived to take his place, they found that Tehorenyaegnon and his substitute had lost all repute, and that, on the contrary, the populace

was putting its faith in another well-known medicine man, Tsondacwane, one of the gravest and most dignified savages the Fathers had seen. This latter, holding forth in public council, to which the black robes were invited, spoke as a prophet with great authority, declaring that if they did not do as he ordered the sickness would endure till the month of July. Then he told the Hurons :

"Henceforward you must put your dead in the ground, but in the spring you should take them out and place them in bark tombs raised upon four posts as usual. You shall give them no mats to lie on, at least no new ones. For myself, I require that you give to me five cakes of tobacco."

This was supplied to the prophet and they then reassembled outside the village, a captain warning the children to make no noise. A great fire was lighted and the prophet threw the tobacco into the flames, while uttering his prayer.

"O Sun," he said, "this do we in honour of thee. Do thou look down favourably upon us. Ye demons of the air and the night, and thou, O Pest, who so severely afflictest us, we conjure you to leave the country. Repair ye, with all possible speed, to the lands of the Iroquois."

Then he revealed to the people of Ossossane the prescription they had to use for their sick. This consisted in taking the bark of the ash, the spruce, the hemlock, and the wild cherry, boiling them together in a great kettle, and washing the whole body therewith.

That night they prepared for a ceremonial dance which the Demon of the Pest had commanded to one of the sick captains in a dream. The dancers, both men and women, were disguised as hunchbacks, each wearing a painted wooden mask, and each carrying a staff in one hand. The dance was celebrated in the cabin of Andahiach, host to the two Fathers. At the end of the dance, by the command of

Tsondacwane, the sorcerer, the masks were hung at the end of poles and placed over every cabin, side by side with the straw men, who stood there also, instilling terror into the malady, and scaring away the demons who made them die.

Then Tsondacwane demanded eight cakes of tobacco and three fish of the species known as Atsihiendo, which the savages caught by decoying to the edge of the water, and with the tobacco he sacrificed to the demons. As he did so a tremendous din and clatter was raised in all the cabins, lasting half an hour. When it ceased Andahiach, captain of the town, addressed the masks and the straw men that gibbered and grinned in front of the cabins.

"We conjure you," he said, "that you keep a good watch. Do not let the demons or the disease enter our cabin. Do your best to put fear in their hearts and turn them away. And to give you courage, behold the tobacco which we throw in the fire in your honour."

And then the Fathers heard their host making the rounds of the cabins and talking to the women of the troubles that beset the Hurons, among which the Iroquois figured as one.

"Do not allow yourselves to be cast down with sorrow on account of the death of your relatives," he proclaimed to the women as he walked between the cabins. "But when the young men come to bring you hemp to spin to cover shields for them and to make bowstrings, be sure willingly to render them this service. In the spring we shall go to war against the Iroquois, and we shall place you in security so that you will be able to work in peace and confidence in your fields."

The Fathers visited many cabins in Ossossane, but found the minds of the savages too deeply troubled to listen to anything but what concerned their immediate succour.

They set out therefore to return to Ihonatiria. The snow had continued to fall and the cold was so intense that the entire inland sea of the Hurons was reported to be frozen. Along most of the way they found the path less than a foot wide where the snow was firm enough to sustain them, and they had often to plunge forward with the snow up to their thighs.

CHAPTER XIX

THE CHEVEUX RELEVÉS

ON the day of Holy Trinity deep happiness prevailed in the mission house at Ihonatiria, for on that ever to be remembered feast Tsiouendaentaha was baptized, the first adult savage in health in the country of the Hurons, considered worthy after three years of trial and instruction to be signed with the sign of that happy consummation.

Many a little stricken savage innocent had winged its way to Heaven after the cleansing waters had been sprinkled over it. Many savage men and women of all ages, in the agony of death, had been instructed and baptized by the Fathers and thus placed among the blessed, by inscrutable providence, after lives of unbridled licence and every kind of aboriginal crime. But here was a savage chief, fully fifty years old, a man of intelligence and one of the most influential in the councils of the tribes, after mature consideration which made him cognizant of all the sacrifices his conversion would entail, giving complete proofs of his determination to abandon the life of the savage and earnestly requesting baptism.

It pleased the Fathers that in an hour when the powers of darkness appeared to hold the upper hand, when baptism was being decried in all the tribes around as a sorcery that sent the sick to inevitable death, when the most renowned medicine men in the four nations of the Hurons were

warning the tribesmen against the sweetmeats of the black robes, when the Old Men in friendship with the Jesuits were persuading them for their good to hasten back to France, and when the cry was being raised from the Nipissing isles to the waters of Wentaron that their presence had become unendurable and that the heads of every one of the Frenchmen must be split, it was a happiness to them to be permitted thus to look on the firstfruits of their harvest.

The sacrament was publicly administered with all the ceremonies of the church, in the presence of the chief captains of all the neighbouring towns, who watched the entire ritual with a wide-eyed astonishment that frequently broke the silence with clamorous appreciation.

The Jesuit chapel was a wonder of the Huron world, but it never before looked as well as it did on that occasion. The day itself was one of the most beautiful days of opening summer ever seen in the country of the Hurons. There were decorations everywhere, and the log fire had been extinguished in the cabin to make more room for the congregation.

The portico was entwined with leaves mingled with tinsel, and everything of beauty which the French possessed was placed on view. The Fathers wore their vestments or surplices and birettas. Devotional life-size pictures of many colours filled with wonder the savages who crowded within and without, although they trembled with fear at the threshold.

But the rarest picture of all was Tsiouendaentaha, first of the catechumens, on whom all present fixed their eyes, as on the hero of a drama the like of which had never been seen before. Standing alone below the sanctuary in a posture new to the savage he trembled all over so that his tongue failed

him in the responses. As Father Brebeuf put the required questions, the answers to which he had before been taught, all he could do was to look pleadingly up.

"Echon, I do not know what to answer," he said.

However, when it was only a question of "Yes" or "No," he spoke out with such force and distinctness as to leave no doubt that he renounced with all his heart the superstitions of his tribe. The ceremony made a deep impression and the unusual decorations brought about a quiet extraordinary in a savage assembly. But one old man, a friend of Tsiouendaentaha, could not keep from talking aloud.

"Now, my brothers," he said, "you observe it is better to do as Tsiouendaentaha does than to wait till sickness deprives you of judgment and understanding. Let everyone imitate Tsiouendaentaha and be baptized like him as soon as possible."

An hour or two later the Fathers made a feast for all the people, consisting of smoked fish cooked with native corn. The chapel was left with its decorations during the whole day and a procession of sight-seeing savages trooped in. Some could hardly summon courage to cross the threshold. Others trembled before the pictures of the Judgment. The crucifix filled them with compassion.

"Courage, my nephew, courage," cried one old man, gazing at the figure on high; "have courage and take care of us."

The conversion of Tsiouendaentaha, who had thus abandoned his Huron ancestors and become a relative of the French, never more to be seen at their gorging feasts, their devil dances, their Aoutaeroi ceremonies, their dream games and sacrifices to the demons of earth and sky and air, became a topic of discussion round all the council fires of

the Nation of the Bear, and became bruited abroad even to the Petuns, or Tobacco Nation, and the Attiwandarons, round the swift stream of Onghuiaarha, where some had heard a distant thunder as of tumbling waters over immense precipices, where the lake of the Iroquois received the falling seas of the Hurons, the upper Algonquins, the Ehriehronnons and the Ottawas.

From Wenrio news was brought to the Fathers of a grave gathering of thought among the Old Men concerning the painted representation of the damned and the flames of hell which all had seen at the baptism of Tsiouendaentaha. They shuddered over the giant serpents and dragons tearing the entrails of lost souls, and the horrible instruments for their punishment, such as had never been heard of even among the Iroquois.

It was anxiously inquired whether this vast multitude of desperate men and women, heaped one upon the other, were not the souls of their Huron relatives, whom the black robes had caused to die during the preceding winter. There were some who thought they saw among those suffering souls the distorted features of the relatives whom they still loved and mourned. They pondered over the probabilities as to whether those terrible flames, leaping up and wrapping in their embrace the souls in hell, were not the source of the emanations that had consumed their sick and burned them with the heats of pestilential fevers ; and as to whether those great dragons and serpents were not the venomous beasts the French strangers in their midst made use of to carry poison abroad.

Enditsacone, a captain of Onnentisati, a man of much intelligence, whom the Fathers knew very well, for it was he who had charge of the Iroquois prisoner burnt at Arontaen, whom the Fathers had succoured, gave them a vivid account

of the grave debate at Wenrio. He had always been wonderfully curious to learn about the ways of doing things in France. On this occasion he showed much anxiety over the representation of the Judgment, which still hung in the mission cabin, and he inquired very particularly of Father Brebeuf who the people were that walked on the road to hell, and what the Hurons had to do to go the other way that led to heaven.

Even as the Father instructed him there came a savage from another council delegated to inquire very earnestly from the Superior whether it was really true that the long robes were raising the pestilence in their cabin as a domestic animal, for that was a quite common opinion in the country. News came also that the Fathers were accused of concealing the malady in the barrel of an arquebus, by means of which they were easily able to project it where they pleased. About the same time, as Father Lemer cier was returning from Ossossane, a squaw crossed the field of grain in which she worked and brought a grasshopper to him.

"My brother, I beseech thee," she said, "reveal to me the art which thou possessest for curbing and killing these creatures that eat our corn. It has been said to me that the black robes are masters over man and beast, and can give them life or death as they please."

One day, as evening fell, the Fathers were startled by a strange apparition in their cabin. Silently a procession of tall men walked over the threshold and stood before them. They carried in their hands gigantic bows of birch, bent and curved in a manner not seen among the Hurons, with feathered arrows in skin cases slung behind them. Each carried an immense shield of dressed buffalo leather, with painted clubs hanging from a belt at their waists. A huge buffalo or bear cloak fell from the shoulders of each man

almost to the ground, but otherwise they were entirely naked, except for a beaver skin that covered the loins in front. Their bodies were coloured and tattooed in a great variety of figures and patterns, and the faces so streaked and painted that the Fathers were unable to read any expression for good or ill out of them. Their nostrils were pierced and their ears adorned with beads.

But the most startling feature in their appearance was the style of their hair and headdress, which surpassed that of any exquisite or courtier ever seen in France. For the luxurious hair was dressed enormously high, and combed and turbaned and beribboned into configurations of what looked like plumed casques or the antlers of the moose.

It was this feature of their appearance which suggested to Father Brebeuf that they might be of the renowned Algonquin tribe to whom *Sieur de Champlain* had given the name of the "Cheveux Relevés," in the neighbourhood of the *Mascoutins*, or Nation of Fire. And this they proved to be.

The repute of the black robes, dwelling in the midst of the Nation of the Bear, as most powerful of captains among the medicine men and sorcerers, and masters and arbiters of life and death, had spread even to these *Andatahouats*, people of the forest, beyond the mountains of the *Petuns*, and far towards the southern *Vermilion Sea*; and the ghostly figures that stood within their cabin were delegates in a special embassy sent with presents and an appeal that the French sorcerers and masters of the epidemic might look with compassion on their country.

The chief sagamore among the ambassadors laid on the floor of the mission house buffalo robes, and wampum belts, and mats wrought like Turkish rugs. Then he addressed Father Brebeuf.

"Great Arendiwane," he said very humbly, "the fame of thy powers has reached our land and how it is given to thee to have control of the malady which has so often worked havoc amongst us and how thou art able to curb it or propagate it as thou wilt. Behold the presents we have been delegated to bring to thee from our nation that dwells in the southern forest, who were at one time happy to receive the great captain of thy nation in our cabins.

"We give thee these gifts that they may smooth the wrinkles on thy brow and make thee comfortable, so that anger will not assail thee, and that thou wilt have affectionate thoughts concerning our nation. We beseech thee to spare the men and the women and the children in our land in the midst of this great calamity and have regard for the affection which we bear thee and the French."

The Fathers listened to this heartfelt appeal, feeling themselves not a little touched by the anxiety of the suppliants, who put such faith in their powers. Then Father Brebeuf replied to them.

"My brothers," he said, "it is a matter of great happiness to us that you should have made this long journey to visit us, and we can only wish that it was in our power to grant you all you seek. These beautiful and valuable presents which you have brought to us we appreciate greatly and thank you most heartily for the spirit that has prompted you to bring them to us. But it is not in our power to accept them.

"For it is not to us that you should address your appeals, but to One much mightier than we are, who has made the heavens and the earth and every living thing that dwells upon it, and who alone is the sovereign lord of life and death. It is to Him that we have recourse in all calamities,

and it is to Him that you also should have recourse. We hope that the day will come soon when we will be able to send our Fathers even to your distant nation and teach you how to pray and to speak to Him who made all. As for ourselves we possess no power over this sickness beyond that which we receive by having recourse to Him, and that remedy we have found the most efficacious of all."

The Fathers then served as hosts to the ambassadors, and put as many as they could find room for up for the night, laying mats around the central log fire. They talked with them regarding affairs in their country, and the next day they left, very well satisfied, and promising to follow the counsel of the Fathers.

Meanwhile Tonnerounont, renowned hunchback sorcerer of Onnentisati, after remaining nailed to his mat with a broken leg, which to his deep chagrin neither his own sorcery nor the most furious devil dancing of his tribe could cure, died miserably, cursing the black robes who in conjunction with his twin demon-sister he blamed for all his woes, and commanding that his body be placed deep in the ground, that he might the more easily return to the long house of the demons which he had deserted to ascend to earth.

His going left Sondacouane, who dwelt at Andiatæ, and Tehorenhaegnon, who dwelt at Onnentisati, without a rival as chief medicine men of the country, and these, to repair their sorely battered credit, for their own towns were suffering more than any from the pest, issued strong fulminations against the black robes to whose superior magic and occult art they ascribed the futility of their mystic sweats, their feasts, their potions, and the most secret ritual of their sorceries.

Sondacouane showed himself especially active in his hostility, and issued a particular interdiction against the "French snow," or sugar, prohibiting the sick from partaking of that poison, and making a circuit of all the villages proclaiming the black robes the authors of the malady. And in proof of this he cited the vision of a sorcerer of the Algonquins who had seen the sister of Etienne Brulé, whom the Nation of the Bear had killed, infecting the Hurons with her breath and her exhalations; declaring further that he himself had seen tainted influences proceeding from the images at Ihonatoria and stealing into the chests of those who looked at them.

But though the chief men intimated to the Fathers that foul deeds perpetrated by heedless men, excited by these rumours, might make the nation blush, the Fathers refused to abate their usual functions.

"We are in God's hands," declared Father Brebeuf, "and these dangers cannot make us swerve. It would be too great an honour to lose our lives while employed in saving some poor soul. The cross has never been planted save in the midst of persecution. It will be planted here if necessary at the cost of our lives."

The rumour concerning the sister of Etienne Brulé, who had been slain at Toanché, while Brebeuf was absent in France, reached the distant country of the Cheveux Relevés, whither the embassy to the black robes had returned to find the plague raging violently, so that there were as many as seventy dead. The rumour arrived while the chief men were in deep cogitation over the cause of their misfortune and brought to them a great light. For certain of the Cheveux Relevés recalled that they had once robbed that Frenchman, who had long dwelt among the Hurons and almost turned savage, of a collar of twenty-four hundred porcelain beads.

The thieves accused themselves before the senatorial assembly of the Old Men, who, seeing therein the source of the malady, determined on restitution, and started on the long journey to see the French again to repair the wrong. The Fathers at Ihonatiria were greatly astonished to see this second assembly of the Cheveux Relevés before them and to hear the Old Men addressing them in terms that excited deep compassion. They spread out on the mat the two thousand four hundred porcelain beads, which they had collected by a contribution made by the survivors in their villages, and they conjured the Fathers to receive the collar in satisfaction for the theft committed against their countryman.

"Have pity on us," beseeched their spokesman. "We beg of you to preserve to us the few of our brethren who have been spared up to this time."

"My brothers," answered the Father Superior, "I cannot deny to you that it appears very well advised on your part to make this restitution. The theft having been committed, it would only be an act of justice on your part not to keep the property of others. But it would be impossible for us to keep or accept this collar, since it has not been stolen from us, and Etienne Brulé, from whom it was taken, being dead, there is no one in the country who could receive it in his name.

"Moreover we are not able to accept this restitution from you on other grounds, for it would inevitably lead to adverse rumours to the effect that we were in league with those outside the country in which we lived. The Hurons, who would soon get wind of the affair, would regard the gift not simply as an act of restitution, but as the visible token of a secret understanding between us, particularly if, following it, the sick in your country began to recover. Content yourselves,

my brothers, that you have undertaken to restore what did not belong to you."

The Cheveux Relevés were greatly pleased with the reception given them by the Fathers and returned home with their porcelain, enriched in addition with some small presents which they greatly esteemed.

CHAPTER XX

GATHERING OF THE STORM

IN June that followed, one of the early ambitions of Father Brebeuf and his companions reached its consummation, and their second residence at Ossossane, the heart and capital of the country of the Nation of the Bear, was, with the assistance of the most influential headmen of that populous town, overlooking, like Ihonatiria, the fresh water ocean of the Hurons, entirely made ready for them.

Father Brebeuf had broached the subject of this new mission house to the captains of Ossossane only in May, so the work had gone forward rapidly. They bound themselves to build for the Frenchmen a cedar bark cabin of twelve brasses, or seventy-two feet, apologising for not making it larger on the ground that the malady had carried off so many of their young men, while others had gone trading or fishing, and promising to add to it in the year that would follow. Father Pierre Pijart, a day or two after the council, left Ihonatiria with two domestics to take charge of the work, the savages on his arrival at Ossossane taking their hatchets and clearing the forest for the site.

Father Pijart acted as overseer of the work of building during the day, and at night slept in the cabin of one Arentarou, a barbarian of remarkable amiability, whom he had met in Quebec and who brought him in his canoe up the river of the Ottawas, treating him as though he were his own son.

Arentarou, along with his daughter, was already ill with the malady, and surrounded by medicine men when the priest arrived, and he had not been there many days when he had to sit by as an Aoutaerohi ceremony was gone through as a remedy for both.

As the savages sang and danced like demons he watched a certain captain, Oscouta, take in his mouth a great red-hot coal and carry it to the patients, making many grimaces and growling in their ears like a bear. The coal was not hard enough and broke within his mouth ; so they started to use red-hot stones, making for the purpose a fire big enough to burn down the cabin. Twenty-four tribesmen were chosen to sing and dance and perform all the ceremonies, and this they did with lugubrious effect.

Then they separated the brands, drew the red-hot stones, each as large as a goose egg, from the midst of the fire, and holding their hands behind their backs took these between their teeth and carried them to the patients, blowing upon them and growling in their ears. Then they rubbed the bodies of the father and the daughter with glowing embers. This was followed by a sweat, in which the host and twenty other naked men were piled one upon another in an oven of hot stones.

Finding neither himself nor his daughter any better at the end, Arentarou asked for the ministrations of the black robes, and Father Pijart willingly did all for him that he could. Arentarou died shortly after, but the daughter survived and grew well again. After his death Father Brebeuf and Father Chatellain went from Ihonatiria to console the relatives with presents, for the family had been conspicuous in their kindness to the Fathers, going and coming through Ossossane between Ihonatiria and the southern frontier towns.

Father Pijart was already able to make the new residence his home, when ten pieces of bark still required to be added to finish it. Before the middle of June fifty savages, headed by their captains, made the journey to Ihonatiria and back to bring to Ossossane the Jesuit stock of corn and the articles of furniture required. By the middle of the month Father Lemer cier and Father Pijart were using it as a new centre for their ministrations in the metropolis itself and the surrounding villages.

The new mission house had only been half completed when it began to attract savages from all directions, and the Fathers had all they could do to keep watch on the hands of their visitors apart from their work of visiting the sick and other duties. They had erected a sort of altar where they had placed a number of little pictures and two life-size coloured representations of Christ and His Mother. The crowds resounded with expressions of admiration over these extraordinary apparitions and they had to be left exposed all day to satisfy the people.

The exposition had bad results rather than good ; for apart from the continual procession of the inquisitive a new incentive was given to the magicians and medicine men to spread reports accusing the black robes of sorcery and of bringing calamity on the country. In a few days new rumours against the long-robed Frenchmen had been propagated through the hamlets around Ossossane.

As the Fathers went through the streets the women and the children pointed them out as the destroyers of their relatives. An entire village came to the decision to leave off using even French kettles, imagining that everything that came from the French was capable of communicating the disease. Even the captains of the villages, most of whom were on terms of friendship with the Jesuits, became mute in the

face of the universal accusations and were constrained to find excuses for having taken part in the building of their cabin.

As the malady increased and cut down the strongest and the fairest in the land, the despair of the savages grew, and the accusations against the black robes, who went about always unarmed and were the only conspicuous targets in view, spread and multiplied. One rumour was to the effect that they had brought a corpse from France and that there was, without doubt, something in the tabernacle that made them die. It was easy to understand how that report arose.

Another report was that they had established themselves at Ossossane, in the heart of the country, the more easily to procure its total ruin ; and that to accomplish this, they had stabbed a child to death in the woods with a bodkin, and this had caused the death of a great many children. They took umbrage at every act of the Fathers. They complained that they kept their door closed in the morning, possibly for some sorcery. They considered the Litanies incantations. The weather vane the Jesuits had put on the top of a fir tree was thought to have some sinister purpose.

"Where are your wits, you nephews of mine ? " asked a sachem one day. "What does that piece of cloth placed so high up there mean ? " Being told it was to show which way the wind blew, he appeared to see a light.

"You should put up a larger piece," he said in a less reproachful tone. "Then we could see it from a greater distance."

Indeed almost coincidentally with the establishment of the new residence at Ossossane, and after the departure of the fleet of canoes for the trading at Quebec, the malady, which before had assailed only a few villages, became everywhere prevalent, extending with the summer heat.

The mortality was particularly heavy in the village of Angoutenc, about three-quarters of a league from Ossossane, and Father Lemer cier and Father Pijart went there to see what they could do. But they found as they entered the cabins the invalids and even those who were well grew nervous at their approach. They would wrap themselves in their robes and cover their faces for fear of speaking to them.

At other cabins the squaws on seeing the Fathers approach would hasten to close the doors in their faces. They already had their feet on the threshold of two others when they were driven away. Long naked arms were thrust out of the cabins to push them back.

"Go away," they were told, "there are sick people here."

A certain war-captain no sooner saw the two priests than seizing a tomahawk he began to pour out threats against them.

"You are sorcerers and worthy of death," yelled the infuriated savage. "Come but a step further, and I will split your heads."

During the afternoon, Ondessone, a leading captain, with a reputation throughout the Huron country, and another notable chief of Angoutenc, called on the Fathers.

"Things are in a bad way, my brothers," he said. "Your visits have ceased to be welcome and a great many are afraid of you. They all think you have brought the plague into the country, and in my judgment it is very desirable that we should hold a council thereon, where you would be present in person, in order to remove these fears, if you can."

"Nothing would please us better," responded Lemer cier.

Then one of the headmen of Ossossane came and drew the two Fathers aside.

"My nephews," he said, "I have something important to

say to you. It is that Anwennen"—he referred to Father Antoine Daniel—"let slip an inconsiderate word which is giving the people a great deal to talk about. Last summer a young man who was entreated to remain in Quebec was about to set foot in the canoe, when he said to him, 'What art thou going to do? Thou art going to thy death; the pestilence is about to ruin thy country, believe me; pass the winter with us, if thou wouldst escape this danger.' That is what I have just learned at Onnentisati, where you people are spoken of in very bad terms. They are altogether certain that you are the cause of our misfortunes."

"How can they believe such things when we have done all we could to relieve their sick, taking the bread out of our own mouths? You have had the pestilence before when we were not here, have you not? We know as little about where the pestilence comes from as you do."

"That may be, my nephew," said the sachem. "I am only telling you what is being said, and these things are leaving a deep impression on the people's minds."

Anxious concerning a sick old man in a cabin near by, the Fathers entered. The invalid was stretched near the fire, but he was strong enough to raise his head and speak.

"My nephews, you are welcome," he said.

"We have come to instruct and baptize you, if you are willing," said Lemercier. But at this the Fathers immediately saw the angry blood mounting into the old man's face. He pulled himself to a sitting posture and shook a menacing finger at them.

"It is you people who are making me die," he piped in a thin, vicious treble. "Since you set foot in this house six days ago, I have eaten nothing; and I have seen you in a dream as persons who are bringing us misfortune; it is you who are making me die."

As the Fathers retreated, seeing the hopelessness of combating these wild superstitions, they realized that things were coming to a head.

"Mark you," observed Father Pijart, "nothing more than that need be said in this country for a man to have his head split by somebody's hatchet. If this malady continues its general havoc the outlook is going to be black for all of us."

From that time on the Fathers desisted from their work of visiting the sick and even from instructing the children in the cabins. They thought it prudent to remain for some time at anchor, as in a furious tempest, hoping for a change in events, while they watched the clouds gathering round them.

CHAPTER XXI

BLACK ROBES BEFORE THE COUNCIL

ONE day a terrified savage brought news to the priests at Ossossane that Father Brebeuf, then on one of his interminable missions of mercy in the depths of the country, had been barbarously murdered.

The blow was a calamity which the fears of the Fathers had invariably thrust beyond the outer horizon of their thoughts as the end of all things, while admitting to their reason that there was no stroke of adversity quite so likely. For while the Fathers everywhere had won for themselves a reputation as the greatest sorcerers ever seen in the land of the Hurons, the fame of Echon had spread even to the frontiers of the Iroquois as the arch-sorcerer of them all. Squaws hushed their weeping babes with his name. Warriors trembled as they spied his tall, athletic figure swinging on savage snow shoes or walking with long, rapid strides, as was his wont, into their village.

The miracle of his sublime patience, which no barbarity could ruffle, the grave benignity that shone from his eyes, his self-immolating chivalry, his generosity, and his heroic sympathy, were not sufficient to convince them that that iron figure of grace was not the Iouskeha, son of Aataentsic, in the flesh, commanding the lightning that was mowing them down. In every corner of the Huron land the word had gone forth that the Father Superior, who commanded the black robes in the Nation of the Bear, was the incarnate omnipotent demon god and author of all their woes.

If the blow descended on the Fathers as the last irremediable catastrophe, hardly less was the consternation stirred by the intelligence in all the Huron towns. For though few savages placed less value than the Hurons on the life of a man, and though among them the title of sorcerer was almost equivalent to a sentence of imminent death, they could not but feel that the undoing of a personage of another nation so important would, even apart from its other consequences, tax for its settlement, even by the savage code, almost all the resources of the country.

The Father had moreover powerful friends among the leading captains, who believed completely in the goodwill of the French, and who would spare no extremity of prophecy in painting before the eyes of the conspirators the ruination of the country which so fatal a quarrel with the French power would entail. The report carried a sense of doom to all who heard it. From the hour of its arrival the mission houses both at Ihonatiria and at Ossossane were deserted by all.

The Fathers alone, sheep without a shepherd, and the most miserable of outcasts, prayed for light in the darkness that lurked with every imaginable menace on every side. The savages kept to their own cabins, and through the slits in their bark walls gazed from a discreet distance at the mission houses as abodes of dread.

The undisguised hostility of the savages had already compelled Father Lemer cier and Father Pijart, who were stationed at Ossossane, from trying any longer to visit the cabins either for instructing the children or solacing the sick. They only left the new mission house therefore on necessary errands or in obedience to voluntary calls from those who had faith in them and desired their help. As these had now become infrequent, they were most of the time together, and

were one night discussing ways and means by the faint flicker of a lighted roll of bark, the only candle of the country, when a faint knocking at their outer door was heard. The stress had greatly tried them and the young Fathers looked at each other with mutual anxiety.

"What do you think it is?" asked Father Lemer cier.

"It is an unusual hour even for a savage to call, with our fire not burning," replied Father Pijart.

"And it is an unusual way of calling. The savages are usually more blustery than that. Do you think they can have any evil object in view?"

"Father Lemer cier, I do not know. The tragedy that has bereaved us has made me fear the very worst. At this moment my heart is beating strangely within me, but that is only human weakness. If the end is to come this hour, we can only bow to the inscrutable providence of God. It may be that He considers the excesses of the Hurons have made them unworthy of receiving His word."

The young priest stood up, his hands clasped together, his head poised in a still listening attitude.

"I have always desired that when my death should come, if a martyr's death it was to be, it should be when I was in the act of assisting some poor soul and engaged in some work of mercy. But I have always been prepared to stretch forward my head for the stroke, whenever it pleased His will to permit it."

The priests were now standing and looking at each other as the faint light from the dying bark fire shone on both.

As they listened the knock came again, and this time a thrill of deep relief showed itself in their faces, for there was something familiar and unsavage about it. The knock was a French knock, more decided than the first, but confident and friendly.

"Father in Heaven, it is one of our brothers from Ihonatoria—perhaps from Quebec. To think we should have kept him waiting even for a moment when he must be as heart-broken as we," cried Father Pijart, fumbling in his eagerness for the large ordinance key, and pulling back the bars.

"Father Chatellain, Father Daniel, Father Jogues, Dominique, whoever you are, we welcome you as an angel from Heaven."

As the Fathers spoke a wolfhound they had brought with them from Ihonatoria had darted from its kennel under one of the platforms and was leaping with great whining and yelping behind the door.

"Even Roland knows it is one of our Frenchmen," cried Lemercier, as Father Pijart swung the door open.

As he did so Roland darted out into the portico with so much momentum that the figure outside fell back a pace or two into the darkness, where with the sounds of wrestling and caressing a deep booming French voice was heard. The Fathers listened with startled ears, peering into the blackness outside. A moment later Father Brebeuf, with Roland licking his face and whining ceaselessly, crossed the threshold of the mission house.

Both Lemercier and Pijart were men of bronze. It was because steadfastness and courage were conspicuous in them in a measure beyond the strength of ordinary men that they had been picked by their superiors in France for this last outpost of danger at the end of the world. It was because over and above all human weakness there was recognised in them that disciplined iron will which a world of unknown trial and peril demanded and which torture and death might bend but never break. But they were human also, and the unexpected appearance of Father Brebeuf, whom they had already been beseeching as a saint in heaven,

revealed to them under what a grievous pall of suffering they had been floundering as at the bottom of a storm-tossed sea. They opened their eyes in the presence of the Superior as though a beatific vision had been vouchsafed to them as to the men of Emmaus or as if they were being victimized by a spectral dream.

And then reason returned. Tears of joy welled in the wide-open eyes of both and poured down unrestrainedly, as the Superior embraced them with unusual tenderness, pressing them against his strong bosom with deep emotion.

"My Fathers, I have hastened with all speed to come to you, for I feared you would be under much anxiety owing to the reports of my death. I was in Tenaustaye, among the Attignenonaghac, when the rumour first came to my ears, and I did not pay much attention to it. But finding that in every village people had accepted the rumour as true, and looked on me as one risen from the dead, I knew that it would be so reported to you, and at once started out to return to relieve you of your anxiety."

"Your Reverence, both Father Pijart and I thought that you were already dead and among the blessed," said Father Lemercier. "This very night we were praying both for you and to you. Our happiness is really too great."

"It has pleased God not yet to demand that sacrifice from me, though He well knows that we are every one of us quite prepared at the moment He calls to surrender that life of the body which we have received from His hands. However it is a great joy to be with you in your new home."

Father Brebeuf looked round at the walls and the furniture with much interest. He had only seen the new mission house with the saplings in the ground and the bark not yet laid.

"The savages have done good work, I see. They too must have credited the report of my death."

"Everyone in Ossossane believes that you have been killed. They even gave us the details of the murder and the name of the murderer. Not one of them has come near the mission house since the report has been received. We have been regarded only with dread," the Fathers told the Superior.

"That is a bad state of affairs. Let us put things right immediately. Father Lemercier, let us go. You and I will visit the captains and reassure them. We must try and bring things back to normal."

The two Fathers at once set out to visit the captain of Ossossane, who welcomed Father Brebeuf as one resurrected from the grave. The rumour of his safe arrival was quickly bruited through the cabins, and the Old Men left their mats to welcome him even in the small hours. There was great rejoicing everywhere, and Father Brebeuf had difficulty in tearing himself away from the throngs who sought to see and touch him, to be sure he was not a spirit, but living and substantial flesh. There was a great lifting of anxiety on every side.

But the Hurons were a fickle people, and the relief was only momentary. Before Father Brebeuf had left Ihonatiria he had received word of a council at Angoutenc which had reached a decision to kill some Frenchman, whoever he might be. The savages now returned to the contemplation of their woes and to the search for a scape-goat. The Fathers on their part desired above all that before rumours inflamed the maddened warriors to the perpetration of some dreadful deed they might have an opportunity of setting themselves right before the headmen of the country.

This opportunity now came to the Fathers, but under grave auspices. The Old Men in all the chief towns having repeatedly taken council in their local assemblies had initiated a move for a General Council of captains of three of the four nations of the Hurons, the Attignauouentans, or the Nation of the Bear, the Arendarrhonons, or the Nation of the Rock, and the Attignenonaghac, or Nation of the Cord. The ostensible purpose was to discuss questions of war, but the Fathers were well aware that they themselves were to be the chief topic in debate and that a decision was to be come to regarding their removal or death.

The council opened at Ossossane at eight in the evening on August 4, and the Fathers were placed on one side of the great federal war cabin in the midst of the captains of the Nation of the Bear, while the other two nations occupied the other side.

They felt very much alone. Leading men, who had formerly shown great friendship, now deserted them. The councillors themselves sat like corpses, and when they opened their mouths, it was only to enumerate the sick and the dead of their families. The Fathers understood this to be a ruse to excite enmity against them and bring about a sentence of death.

The great wolfhounds, that sat placidly through ordinary councils, circled in and around the Fathers, their moist breath hot on their faces, their sharp teeth often in contact with their persons. It was a visible symbol to them of the venom that raged behind so many black eyes that glittered through the curling smoke.

The dignity of acting as President was yielded by all the senators to the blind Ontitarac, the oldest man present. In a rather strong but trembling voice he saluted the chiefs and the nations assembled, complimenting them on meeting

to deliberate on a matter regarded as the most weighty in the country. For the preservation of all was now at stake, and they were called upon to discover the authors of the pestilence and remedy the evil.

"Therefore, my brothers," he concluded, "do not hesitate to speak with perfect candour. Make clear to us all you know and do not conceal that which you feel to be true."

It was then the turn of the Master of the Solemn Feast of the Dead, chief of the council of the whole country, whom the Fathers were aware had been conspicuous among their accusers. He was a bent but powerful savage, wearing the insignia of his office, conspicuous among which was a necklace of the ossicles, or bony labyrinths, of the human ear, from which the skeleton of a yellow hand fell on his gnarled chest.

"Ancients of the Nation of the Bear, and of the Nation of the Rock, and of our brothers, the Attignenonaghac, who hold the frontier towns against the bloody and implacable Iroquois, you all know as well as I do of the calamities that are now wasting our country. Our children are being taken away from us. Our young warriors are falling before our eyes, our homes are desolate of the gentle voices of our squaws and our daughters, and despite all our efforts we are unable to lay hold of the hands that slay them. If it was the tomahawk of the enemy that fell upon us; if it was the conflagration of the fires lit by them that consumed us, we would at least have the satisfaction of knowing who were our murderers. But there are those who have come into our land, possessed of a knowledge and a power far in excess of the simplicity of the Hurons and their ancestors, and who are at present sitting in this assembly with us and may at this very moment be encompassing our death."

There could be no mistaking who were thus being accused by the highest official of the country, for there at once broke forth a rumble of angry muttering, in which the wolfhounds took part, lashing about fiercely; and almost every eye was fixed malignantly on the small group of black robes. The orator still continued to talk, but in a voice which emotion made so indistinct that the Fathers were unable to gather even the general drift of his discourse.

At once Father Brebeuf rose to his feet and the Master of the Feast of the Dead gave way.

"My brothers of the Hurons," he said, "we are very glad that the slanders and the accusations that have so long been uttered concerning the French who have come to this country for no other reason than to show their love for you should now be plainly uttered in our hearing, so that we may be in a position to refute them. But we are so far removed from those who have constituted themselves our chief accusers, that we are unable correctly to understand what they say. With your permission therefore we will take our position amongst those with the bloodiest weapons to produce against us, so that there will be no doubt in the end as to who is right and who is wrong."

The Hurons were greatly taken aback by the mien of the Father and his extraordinary act of boldness, for the Superior, followed by the rest of the Fathers, at once left his place and threw his mat to the earth alongside the group of his accusers. This incident added perceptibly to the excitement of the conclave.

An Old Man, unknown to the Fathers, then arose.

"My brothers," he said, "you know well that it is a custom with me seldom to speak in our councils of war, and that I am a man of deeds rather than of speech. But I cannot

now be silent, for the other captains of our village are dead, and before I follow them to the grave it behoves me to speak my mind on the ruin of the country.

“ Things grow worse from day to day ; the malady has now run over all the cabins in our village and has so ravaged my own that where we heard the happy voices of numerous children and the tender prattle of our maidens we are now reduced to two. I have seen the pestilence in our land before this, but never a pestilence like unto this. For in former years it was come and gone in a couple of moons, and in a short time, our family multiplying again, we soon lost the memory of our bereavement. But the moon has now come and gone a dozen times since this affliction visited us, and instead of getting better it is getting worse.

“ But what causes us more uneasiness than anything else is that this disease should so pass our comprehension, we know not from what quarter it comes. I can only repeat to you what I have heard,” and here the orator went on to repeat the accusations of sorcery bruited against the black robes, the rumours about bewitched cloths, and arquebuses, and serpents breathing poison.

He concluded :

“ I am speaking without passion. I have sought only to tell the truth. I do not hate the French and I do not love them. I simply have declined to have anything to do with them, and I look on them, and they look on me, for the first time today.”

Father Brebeuf then asked for a hearing. This being granted, he at once put a number of questions to the last accuser, and answered him with so much effect that that orator sat in deep confusion, without a word more to say. But accusers then rose on every side, and Ontitarac, the blind President, finally asked the Father to produce the

piece of bewitched cloth all were convinced he was guarding as the means by which he was able to compass the ruin of the country.

"I have the authority of the council for assuring thee, Echon," he concluded, "that thy life will be spared, if thou wilt admit that the bewitched cloth is in thy house."

"How can I or anyone else make such an admission, when such a cloth does not exist and could not possibly exist?" answered the Superior.

"That does not signify," said the President, "only let fall the word, my nephew; do not fear, it will do thee no harm." And all the other senators began to urge him in like manner.

Finally, the Father, ceaselessly importuned, said:

"Let us settle the matter in this way. If you continue to refuse to believe me, I invite you to send a delegation to our house and let every corner of it be searched; and if you are afraid of being imposed upon, since we have different kinds of cloths and stuffs, you can throw every one of them into the lake."

A chorus of triumphant exclamations went up as the Father said this, and the President smiled mysteriously.

"The very way that sorcerers and guilty people talk when they are pressed to the wall," he said.

But Brebeuf continued with increased energy:

"I and the rest of the French talk not as guilty people, but as people who have sought not to injure the Hurons but to bring them every blessing, and who are in no wise guilty of any wrong-doing towards them. How dost thou wish me to talk except to deny the accusations made against us?" he asked.

"We wish thee to tell us what makes us die," said one of the Old Men.

"That I know as little as you do," answered the Father, "but since you urge me so strongly, I will tell you something you all should know."

The President refused to listen.

"We are here," he said, "only to find out one thing, the authors of this disease."

And when the Father endeavoured again to reply, Otasaana, a medicine man of bad repute who had always shown great venom against the Fathers and who had been more active than any in calling together the council and urging that a sentence of death be pronounced, rose in anger and interrupted him.

"What kind of people are these anyway?" he railed. "They are for ever making the same speech a hundred times over—perpetually talking about their oki, the Great Spirit they worship, what He has commanded, what He has forbidden, hell, paradise and the rest. We have heard enough of all this. What we want to know is how you sorcerers are killing the people and what are the means by which you do it."

Upon this the Father sat down and kept silent. Then one of the Old Men with Otasaana by his side, leaving the conclave, and passing near the Superior, said to him:

"If one of the youths decides to split thy head we will not say a word."

Others then left, though the principal men remained, and to these Father Brebeuf spoke with such eloquent sincerity, that it was evident he had made a great impression on them. It was finally arranged to postpone an expression of judgment till the trading fleet had returned, with whatever new information the voyagers might possess, from Quebec.

Brebeuf, on leaving, was surprised to find Otasaana, the medicine man, waiting for him at the council exit and

expressing a desire to borrow certain of his possessions, which the Father agreed to let him have, as he had done before.

As they walked side by side in the darkness a tomahawk flashed before the eyes of the Superior and the medicine man fell with a groan to the earth, his head split in almost two halves. Then the entrance to the cabin they had just left was opened again and the shaft of light thrown from the fire within revealed to Brebeuf the dark face and protruding eye-balls of the assassin who stood before him. Believing that the avenger had mistaken his victim the Father prepared for the death which he now regarded as close upon him.

"Was that stroke intended for me?" he asked of the savage executioner, who was gazing with immense absorption at his work.

"It was not," was the sullen answer. "Otasaana was a sorcerer; thou art not."

Deeply mystified the Father continued on his journey alone. He did not doubt that the sentence of death, which he saw thus summarily carried out, had, according to custom, been secretly pronounced by the council of the Old Men which he had just left.

CHAPTER XXII

THE SENTENCE

FATHER BREBEUF stood watching on the shore of the Huron Sea when at the end of September the Huron trading fleet, that had gone to Three Rivers and Quebec with its cargo of furs, returned.

The savage merchants came back in high spirits, marvelously decorated with ear-rings, bracelets, gorgets, and hair ornaments of porcelain and beads, and declaring themselves the most contented men in the world. *Sieur de Montmagny*, who had succeeded *Sieur de Champlain* as Governor, and all the French had given the Hurons a wonderful reception. They had met them in council and feasted them with peas, *sagamité* and sweetmeats ; there had been unending oratory and exchanges of friendship, and a great procession in which the images, which the Hurons had feared, were raised on high and publicly honoured, dispelling the apprehensions of their use for any evil. When the Hurons on the *St. Lawrence* inquired about the malady, it greatly impressed them that what the French said in the country of the Hurons was repeated at Quebec.

“ They told us the substance of the things that thou hast told us here,” said one of the returning voyagers to Father Brebeuf, “ and also in the same order, and the same connection. As thou hast often said, the truth is the same everywhere.”

The good reports brought from the St. Lawrence interrupted the public persecution of the Fathers, whom the intervention of that event rescued as immediate prey to the fury of the barbarians.

But groups of individuals remained active against them. In October their cabin was set on fire. Savages attempted to strangle a French boy outside their cabin, his cries bringing Father Lemercier, who was a swift and sinewy athlete, to his help. The news that the accusers of the French in the general council had subsequently fallen sick led certain braves to threaten they would themselves deal with the black-robed sorcerers.

A relative of Aenons, captain of Wenrio, who had died shortly after the council, led a company of braves into the mission cabin at Ihonatiria where they threatened the Fathers with their bows and arrows. And the Fathers had great difficulty in freeing themselves of an embassy from the Tobacco Nation which brought them beaver robes "in order," they said, "that the black robes might put an end to the sickness that was ravaging" their country.

Then suddenly convincing evidence came to the Fathers on all hands that their deaths had been decided on. The manner of their death was not disclosed, and the Fathers could have resort only to conjecture as to the savage rite most likely to be used against them. Often the Old Men met and gave the word to the young men, who waylaid and tomahawked the condemned under his own portico. That was the way adopted with sorcerers. Often the cabin of the condemned was turned into a holocaust and all exits barred. At other times there was the ritual of burning and mutilation and cannibal feasting in which the entire populace took part. The Fathers could not be sure which would be their fate.

Then one day a catechumen flew into the residence at Ossossane, all out of breath.

"My nephews," he said to Father Lemercier and the other young priests, "I bring you bad news. You are dead men. The Attignenonaghac are on the road to Ossossane to split your heads. The chief men of Ossossane have gone fishing to be rid of the responsibility. I have got this news from the captain himself."

This was light amid the darkness. The Fathers and the domestics prepared for whatever might come. Dominique and the other *engagés* got their arquebuses ready, and resolved to sell their lives dearly, while the Fathers decided to await death without resistance before the altar. Even as they waited, a friendly captain walked into the mission house.

"My nephews," he said, "I come from those who can no longer endure without regret that you should live. You are required to come quickly to hear what the council has to say to you."

The Fathers found the Old Men assembled under the presidency of Ontitarac, the blind ancient, who had been so harsh with them in the former council. He at once addressed them sharply on the subject of the contagion, the cause of which he attributed to the black robes. He was particularly denunciatory of Father Brebeuf.

"Your captain, Echon," he said, "when he came to the country of the Hurons again three or four winters or so ago, declared that his visit would only be for so many moons, and lo, the appointed time has almost expired. Doubtless he hoped during that time to have leisure enough to destroy all the Hurons by his black and secret art. It is necessary for us if we are not all to be swept from off the face of the earth to put an end as soon as possible to this devastation by the greatest sorcerer that has ever been

imagined in the world. That wicked man has already profited enough by our ruin. Even the Iroquois have done no worse than he. A general council has again been called to listen to him for the last time and to put an end to his machinations."

"That is well," answered Father Chatellain; "hold another council when you please. We promise for our part that we will be present and willingly answer all questions."

The young Father spoke without changing colour and with a great deal of self-command. And that was well. For the Fathers saw the Old Men eyeing them narrowly; and news came to them later that had they shown the slightest wavering or trace of panic, that was to be taken as a confession of guilt and they would have been put to death on the spot.

Meanwhile Father Lemer cier went post haste to Ihonatiria to inform the Superior of the crisis in their affairs. They both returned to Ossossane at once, where Father Brebeuf went to greet the prominent men of the capital city. It was indicated to him that all was over, and that the death sentence had been already pronounced. The Old Men, even those who had been friendly with the Fathers, made no verbal answer to his greeting, but merely bowed their heads. The Superior left them, hoping against hope that the worst might not come to the worst.

The younger priests looked at him on his return to the mission house with anxious eyes. Father Lemer cier was there, and Father Chatellain, and Fathers Garnier and Rageneau. As the Superior observed their troubled looks, deep compassion seized him and he prayed strongly that he himself might be taken as a sacrifice and that these might be spared. But the truth of the situation could not be kept from them.

"My Fathers," he said, "things are at a serious pass. We have got to prepare for the worst. Affliction and despair have put our savages beyond the pale of reason."

Then he went on: "We are perhaps upon the point of shedding our blood and of sacrificing our lives to the service of our good Master. It seems that His goodness consents to accept this sacrifice from me for the expiation of my great and innumerable shortcomings, and to crown, from this time on, the past services and the great and ardent desires which I am aware, my Fathers, animate you also.

"What makes me think that this will not happen is, on the one hand, the excess of my past imperfections, which renders me utterly unworthy of so signal a favour; and on the other, because I do not believe that His goodness will permit his workmen to be put to death, since through His grace there are still some good souls who eagerly receive the seed of the Gospel, notwithstanding the evil speech and persecutions of all men against us. And yet I fear that Divine Justice, seeing the obstinacy of the majority of these barbarians in their follies, may very justly permit them to come and take away the life of the body from those who with all their hearts desire to procure the life of their souls."

At this point the Superior stopped speaking, for that young audience of heroic martyr blood was human also, and though there was not one of them to whom a dying martyrdom would not have appeared a happy release from that life of toil and pain in a land of horror, they could not help it that their thoughts in that hour should fly back to the happy land of France and to those who loved them there.

There was not one of the young priests with skill enough in that tragic hour to fight back his stubborn tears, though their emotion was as much for the beloved and transfigured

man who spoke to them as out of the habitual immolation and exaltation of lives walking perpetually in the shadow of death.

When they had secured command of themselves the Superior spoke to Father Lemercier.

"Father," he said, "I beg of you to write this message, which you can put into the Relation you are sending to Quebec."

When the younger priest had provided himself with paper the Superior went on :

"This is the message in part which I am sending to the Superior in Quebec on your behalf, my Fathers."

And then he dictated to Father Lemercier with some introductory remarks telling of the situation, the following letter to Father Le Jeune :

"I will tell you that all our Fathers await the outcome of this affair with great calmness and contentment of mind. And for myself, I can say to your Reverence with all sincerity that I have not yet had the least apprehension of death for such a cause. But we are all sorry for this—that these poor barbarians, through their own malice, are closing the door to the Gospel and to grace. Whatever conclusion they reach and whatever treatment they give us, we will try, by the grace of our Lord, to endure it patiently for His service.

"It is a singular favour that His goodness extends to us, to make us endure something for His sake. It is also now that we consider ourselves truly to belong to His society. May He be for ever blessed for having appointed us to this country, among many others better than we, to aid Him in bearing the cross. In all things, may His holy will be done ! If He will that at this hour we should die, oh, fortunate hour for us ! If He will to reserve us for other labours, may

He be blessed ! If you hear that God has crowned our insignificant labours, or rather our desires, bless Him ; for it is for Him that we desire to live and die, and it is He that gives us grace therefor.

“ For the rest, if any survive, I have given orders as to all they are to do. I have deemed it advisable for our Fathers and our domestics to withdraw to the houses of those whom they regard as their best friends ; I have charged them to carry to the house of Pierre Tsiouendaentaha, our first Christian, all that belongs to the sacristy—above all, to be especially careful of our dictionary, and all that we have of the language, in a place of safety. As for myself, if God grant me the grace to go to heaven, I will pray Him for them, for the poor Hurons, and I will not forget your Reverence.”

And when the message was written, to be committed to some friendly savages and taken down the river of the Ottawas to Quebec, the Fathers added their names, and a postscript was attached declaring that the Superior had left Father Pijart and Father Jogues at Ihonatiria with the same sentiments.

That night, following a frequent custom, for he found the day always too short for all he had to do, Father Brebeuf rose two hours before the rest of the Fathers, who left their mats at four, to meditate and prepare for what was coming on the morrow.

Complete silence and complete darkness wrapped the cabin and town, and he sat alone with his thoughts. But in a blackness and an isolation that annihilated contact with the visible world, the world of the invisible became luminously present to him. His inner ear caught the savage cry of vengeance and of fear rising through all the Huron land, at first a faint whisper, and then a hoarse and

thunderous tumult—" Murder them ! " " Massacre them ! " " Exterminate them ! "

And then his inner vision was unveiled also and a gigantic black forest opened before his eyes with a steep descent to the world below whence the demons climbed in troops, and filled the air above and the earth beneath him, always advancing upon him like rolling clouds. And first they looked like many of the enraged savages he had seen, black and roasted and menacing, with inflamed faces and panther eyes. And then they would change into great bears who sought to embrace him, or roaring lions who sought to devour him, or he would feel himself under the everlasting stamping of multitudes of untamed horses, or vast chains of mountains would fall one after another ceaselessly upon him.

But the spectres gave him no horror or any impulse of fear. He had vowed long before to become a burnt offering and a victim consecrated to death and never to turn away from the opportunity of martyrdom, though it entailed all the torments that martyrs suffered or all the tortures inflicted on captives in that savage land.

Then during the day that followed, having made all preparations, he invited the men who desired his own life and the lives of the rest of the Fathers, to their Atsataion, or Farewell Feast, which it was the custom of the savages to give as they neared death. In the evening the mission cabin overflowed with guests. Father Brebeuf used the opportunity to counsel them as he had always counselled, but with more than ordinary fervour, as became a last testament to those whose future welfare was his overmastering concern.

The mournful silence of the savages saddened the Fathers more than the perilous fate that hung over their own lives. When the last guest had gone the Fathers waited.

CHAPTER XXIII

AMONG THE NEUTRALS

ONE day, two days, three days came and went, while the entire populace watched and waited, and yet no further move was made by the council, and Brebeuf and the rest of the Fathers still lived. When the apparently doomed men had finished the novena to which they had had recourse in their desperate state, the storm indeed appeared to have spent its force. Threats ceased for a time and the Fathers, as they went about their business, could only wonder over the ensuing incredible calm.

They could only speculate as to what was going on in the minds of the captains and Old Men. There was anguish there unquestionably, and a murderous anger, which was still more visible in the younger braves, but there was also perplexity, and thus though threats might be prolific, and often crystallize into acts of injury and insolence, as indeed they repeatedly did, the reckless leap to massacre and individual murder could not be collectively made. Though the majority of the senators might convince themselves of the guilt of the black robes in effecting the depopulation of the country, there was always a voice that suggested doubt and counselled delay. For whatever might be imagined of the invisible performances of the Jesuits, their visible demeanour and work remained a miracle of benevolence such as Huron eyes had never before seen.

Thus out of the mystery and inexplicability of the black-robos were drawn at once the sword to slay and the buckler that held them immune.

Then Brebeuf, when some time had passed over, led the way across immense wildernesses to the land of wildly racing waters and of landlocked blue-green seas falling precipitously the one into the other, where dwelt the Neutrals, neighbours of the sanguinary Iroquois.

Brebeuf and the other Fathers had long had their eyes turned in the direction of the Neutral Nation, which, forty leagues away to the south, served as buffer between the Huron and the Iroquois, and, the seed at last having been sown in every village and cabin of the Hurons, and new Fathers having arrived from Quebec and France, they found themselves able to allot two apostles to the mission.

Champlain and other early Frenchmen had surnamed these Attiwandarons the " Neutral Nation " ; for, occupying the ordinary land route between the kindred Hurons and Iroquois, and speaking a dialect of the Huron-Iroquois tongue, they kept themselves equally at peace with both.

Previously Huron and Iroquois warriors, despite their immemorial feud, when they met in a cabin of the Neutrals, refrained from breaking the peace ; but at this time their mutual homicidal fury, fed by frequent massacres on both sides, being raised to fever heat, wherever Iroquois and Huron met, even in the circle of an Attiwandaron log-fire, there was a fight to the death, in which the Iroquois was usually the victor, for in addition to his superior arms and implacable lust for torture and war, the Neutrals, through fear or propinquity or affection, generally inclined to the Iroquois side.

The Fathers and all the French, being regarded as allies of the Hurons and Algonquins, against whom, as indeed against all surrounding nations, the Iroquois had declared a war of annihilation, were well aware that the fate which awaited the Huron at Iroquois hands, awaited them also.

They would be burnt, they would be beaten, they would be scalped, mutilated, boiled, or roasted alive, cut to pieces, used to season sagamité, and eaten as though they were the meat of a stag or other wild animal. They would be subjected before death to every barbarity that might occur to the imagination of a demon, for the Iroquois were the tigers and werewolves of the Indian jungle, and whatever atrocity Huron or Neutral or Algonquin might commit, the Iroquois could always be counted on going one better.

This difficult embassy was assumed by Father Brebeuf himself, who took with him Father Joseph Chaumonot, a young priest barely a year from France, with a marked aptitude for the savage tongues.

The two Fathers left the new large mission headquarters of Sainte Marie, which the Fathers, as they grew in numbers, had established as centre for the entire Huron country, at the beginning of November, and soon reached Tenaustaye, the largest and the most southerly of the Huron towns, where they intended to make provision for their journey and meet guides for the way. But they found that the embassy to the Neutrals had aroused the jealousy of Huron merchants in Tenaustaye, as likely to divert French trade to another route and quarter. The guides and interpreters on whom they counted failed them, and instead placed obstacles in their way.

However Brebeuf and his companion were determined

to continue their journey, even if they had to go alone, and they set forth through the wilderness, following the way as best they could. At length they overtook a young savage, who had been in the Neutral country, whom Father Brebeuf induced to act as their guide.

Brebeuf had with him also two of the French *engagés* of the mission house, to make a show of trading and bartering with their help, lest the doors of the Neutral cabins might be shut against them. For it was hoped that through the medium of the goods of this world, in the presence of which the savages were all eyes and ears, they might be interested in the truths of the world to come, in the presence of which they usually preferred to remain invincibly deaf, dumb, and blind, when they did not regard them as the liturgy of a homicidal sorcery.

The four Frenchmen with their guide slept four nights in the woods in the company of the wild beasts that were the sole population of the wilderness. They carried on their backs their food, their books, their chapel, and their European wares. They found the forest trails difficult and very little worn. Brushwood and fallen branches impeded them, and they had to traverse swamps, ravines, brooks and swift rivers along bridges made of trees, uprooted by age or the force of the wind.

The snow had not yet fallen to level the way ; the frost had not had time to cover the watercourses with ice. The path had to be traversed in all its unevenness. They often sank in deep holes, and had to climb rocks and hills, with little shelter from the winds, then both violent and cold.

On the sixth day they arrived at Kandoucho, the first village of the Neutral Nation, one of several near by. The savages gathered as the Frenchmen entered the village and

eyed the black-robcs narrowly. It occurred to Father Brebeuf that Huron reports regarding the magic powers of the strange bearded men had already preceded them, but the pretext of trade made things easy. They were all willingly received in the cabin of the captain of the village, where kettles were immediately slung, the pine-knot fires stirred up, and the sagamité of the country was served.

The Superior had the feeling of having descended to a deeper deep of barbarism, as he mingled with these Attiwandarons, whose home stretched through an earthly paradise beyond the celebrated river that bore amid unceasing thunder over mountainous precipices, through the valley and the gorges of Onguiaarha, the tumbling waters of the inland sea of the Ehriehronnons till they emptied into the Ontario ocean of the Iroquois to be carried past Quebec to the sea.

Both the men and women were taller, stronger and better proportioned even than the Hurons, whose heads and moulded bodies of strength and grace had recalled to the French the statues and medallions of Roman emperors. But many of them, even with summer long gone, walked about entirely naked. Some wore a scanty breech-clout ; the women wore an apron of beaver skin that fell from the waist to the knees.

Some wore over their shoulders pelts of the wolf, the beaver, and the bear, wonderfully dressed and beautified, decorated with bead and porcelain, dyed and painted in many symbolic figures, and trimmed with porcupine quills. Feathers of the eagle and the wild turkey, which went in flocks through their fields and woods, adorned their greased and oiled hair, which was fantastically shaved and dressed much after the manner of both Huron and Iroquois.

Their nakedness, partial or complete, was not apparent at the first glance, for there was hardly a man among them who was not grotesquely tattooed almost from head to foot. Even as the Frenchmen sat in the cabin at Kandoucho they saw the charcoal pricked into the flesh of one tall savage, upon which the lines had previously been traced. On the legs and backs of the savages who scanned them from every vantage point they saw a thousand different figures, geometrical patterns and reproductions of animals and birds. On the faces and breasts of some of the braves they saw representations as complicated as the figures decorating the helmets, breastplates and gorgets of cuirassier and jousting knight.

The usual packs of wolfish dogs roamed in and around the cabins, and barked viciously at the unfamiliar soutanes of the Fathers, till their masters called them off. A great collection of children and squaws blocked the entrance to the cabin of Sononresk, who was their host. His own children and nephews, with the unbridled boldness characteristic of savage children, tried on the shoes and hats of the Fathers and went strutting around in them.

"You have had a long journey," said Sononresk to Brebeuf. "How fares it with the Hurons?"

"Affairs are better than they were," answered the Father. "This last year they have had a very bountiful harvest, and the pest has somewhat abated."

"Report hath it that the malady has taken away half the population in the Huron villages, and that the French are to blame. What sayest thou?" The savage searched the face of the Father keenly.

"It is quite true that the sick and the dead among the Hurons have been many, and that some of the villages

have been scattered and destroyed, but the French have been sufferers also, and they are not to blame. Unfortunately the French know as little about the origin of the disease as do the Hurons or Algonquins. Unlike them they have recourse to a higher power, and ordinarily He has not failed them."

The savage was silent for an interval ; then he said : " As for the Attiwandarons, wars, famine and sickness have been unusually prevalent in our villages, and the deaths here have been many also."

In truth Brebeuf and the other Frenchmen were soon made aware that though the Attiwandarons might be neutral as between the Hurons and Iroquois, with whom they were almost equally related, they were extremely warlike in respect to other nations. They were at that very time engaged in a cruel war with a number of western nations, and particularly with the Mascoutins, or Fire Nation, and a great number of their young men had gone off to that country. They saw many employed in the fashioning of spears and of arrows and bows and they heard talk of the torturing and burning of prisoners. Brebeuf inquired of his host concerning these victims.

" They were one man and two women of the Fire Nation, who are our greatest enemies. They were three of many prisoners taken by our warriors and these three were burnt in our village."

" Did you burn all three ? " asked Brebeuf, somewhat aghast, for even the Hurons did not burn women captives, generally, if not giving them over to be used as slaves, splitting their heads in the heat of the moment and carrying away part of their bodies for a feast.

" Assuredly, for the Mascoutins always do that to ours. The women provided a better spectacle than the men, for

their shrieking was very much louder. We gave their flesh only to the women and children however, fearing ourselves to become like women did we eat them."

As he spoke the Frenchmen could only look one at the other, thus conveying their mutual sense of the yawning rings of horror that descended one below the other in that abyss of barbarism.

"Our men indeed," went on their host, "are always at war with the Nation of Fire. Not long ago they went to their country to the number of two thousand and attacked a village well protected by a palisade and strongly defended by nine hundred warriors who withstood the assault. Finally our braves carried it after a siege of nine days; they killed many on the spot and took eight hundred prisoners—men, women and children."

"What did you do with the captives?" asked Father Brebeuf.

"After having burnt seventy of the best warriors," was the reply, "we put out the eyes and girdled the mouths of all the old men, whom we afterwards abandoned to their own guidance in order that they might thus drag out a miserable life."

The host of the Fathers smiled beatifically as he recalled the confusion of his enemies. There was no delight dearer to the hearts of the savages than cruelty.

The cabins of the savages were always to the Frenchmen a miniature picture of hell, where ordinarily they saw nothing except through fire and smoke, on every side naked bodies, black and half-roasted, mingled pell-mell with the dogs, which were held as dear as the children of the tribe and shared the beds and plates of their masters—clamour and filth everywhere, and everything in a cloud of dust, so that when one of the Fathers went within, before he had

reached the other end of the cabin his ears had been deafened and he was completely befouled with soot and dirt.

But in that Neutral land barbarism carried a still darker hue, and even the natural virtues wore aspects of horror. The population of the unburied dead were more numerous than the living on whom they ceaselessly grinned. Every village was a Golgotha and every cabin a charnel-house, for the Neutrals showed even more tenderness towards their dead than the Hurons, family affection among them requiring that the dead bodies of their relatives should remain the entire winter in their cabins, and even longer, till decomposition set in, when they were stripped of their flesh. Then the shroudless skeletons were set up in the cabins till the Feast of the Dead that came round every twelve years.

At Kandoucho, in the cabin of Sononresk and elsewhere, Brebeuf and the other Frenchmen sat eating their squashes and sagamité in the company of mothers and uncles and nephews of their hosts who had been dead for ten years.

They met the ogling corpses at the doorposts and found them as bedfellows on their sleeping mats. They saw them peeping, like glassy-eyed basilisks, from the bark walls and sitting in the streets. Some of the dead squatted at the cabin doors, blackened, painted, tattooed, feathered and adorned with wampum collars and bracelets more lavishly than warriors going to war or a feast. And they saw the squaws caressing them from time to time and weeping and singing over them and combing their dead hair. The smell of the unsepulchred defunct everywhere mingled with the stench of the unwashed living.

The gloom cast by the omnipresent dead was in contrast with the gross lewdness of the living. There was complete licence and shamelessness everywhere. Naked men, women and children gave as free rein to every animal call and

instinct as the packs of dogs that moved among them. Brebeuf, a man of iron will, whom no difficulty or danger could appal, felt his hopes of an immediate harvest wither as he contemplated the soil in which the seed had to be sown. On the third night after his arrival at Kandoucho he discussed with the other Frenchmen their plan of campaign.

"My brothers," he said, "you see the kind of people the Attiwandarons are. The Hurons are partially civilized compared with them."

"They are indeed," answered Father Chaumonot. "I refused to believe the reports I had heard concerning them; but I see they are only too true."

"These poor people," returned Father Brebeuf, "have had even less contact with the French than the Iroquois, who at least know a good deal about us from their frequent raids. We must take cognizance of the evil tendencies in their minds."

"I fear there will be a long road to travel before they are able to receive our message."

"I greatly fear it. They are steeped in a barbarism that has remained unchanged from ancient times. But if that was all there was to it we might still have hope. I greatly fear there are other obstacles we shall have to surmount."

"You think that Huron emissaries have been among them?"

"I do. Infidel Hurons, hostile to our purposes and fearing the loss of the French trade, have, I fear, been beforehand with us. There can be little doubt that ill reports concerning our motives and our powers have been spread among the Neutrals already. Our first step must have in view an assembly of the captains and the Old Men to whom we may make known our intentions and the nature of our work."

CHAPTER XXIV

HURON EMISSARIES GO BEFORE

BREBEUF learnt that the chief sagamore of the nation of that quarter of the Neutral country was one Tsohahissen, whose cabin, where the councils of war and public affairs met, was in the village of Aronta, east of Kandoucho, a distance of eight leagues. He therefore with his companions set out from Kandoucho to go there early on the fourth day after their arrival at that frontier village.

The character of the country remained very much like the country they had passed through in coming from the Hurons. There were the same deep woods, the same tangled undergrowth, the same swamps and streams and lakes, with the difference that they encountered fewer obstacles on the forest trails. Everywhere there was more evidence of settlement, clearings in the forest, abandoned fields of maize and beans, the burnt hearths of log fires, the ruins of bark cabins, and along the narrow path they followed discarded utensils and weapons, stone and iron tomahawks, earthen and iron kettles, bows and arrows and hoes and spears.

The stone weapons and the earthen utensils greatly outnumbered those in iron, and these latter could have reached the Neutrals, the Fathers conjectured, from the French through the Hurons, and again from the Flemish or Dutch of the New Netherlands on the Atlantic shore through the Iroquois who traded with them.

As the November night began to fall they reached the outskirts of the village of Tonora, more than two-thirds of the distance of Aronta. Since there was nothing to be gained by going farther they decided to seek lodgings for the night in the largest cabin they could find. As they went forward, however, they were confronted by sights that quickly arrested them. They still stood within the shelter of the forest and, without being observed, could see the cluster of bark cabins with the tail of smoke and sparks waving above each roof across an intervening space of ferns and tall squirrel or fescue grass.

But the circumstance that brought the travellers to a stop with a feeling of alarm was that this intervening area appeared to be alive. Dark forms were prowling through the dried sedge after the manner of panther and wolf. Yet those lurking figures were not wild animals of the forest, drawn by hunger into the villages, but human beings, for very plainly every now and again a head would be reared in the dusk and heard to address a companion. At once the thought occurred to the minds of the travellers that they had walked unexpectedly upon a nest of ambushed Iroquois advancing to attack the village before them.

One of the domestics uttered an expression of alarm, while Father Chaumonot addressed his superior.

"It really looks as though we have come on an affray between two of these villages; or could it be possible that we are witnessing an ambush by the Iroquois?" he asked.

Father Brebeuf answered by stretching out his arms and grasping that of the other Father in his left hand, with an intimation that no one should speak. He stood scrutinizing the scene, alert, and still as a statue. Two or three minutes passed in this way. At last he breathed a sigh of relief.

"Come," he said. "It is merely a prank of the savage

youth. They are playing at being Iroquois or something, though their movements are very peculiar."

The four Frenchmen at once advanced out of the woods and, making a circuit of the area where the boys appeared to be playing at war, approached the entrance to the village. But once again they were arrested by a spectacle that deeply mystified them.

For in the open ground that formed the gateway to the cabins there were grown men, of all ages, heavily painted and tattooed, but naked as the hand, going through in absolute silence even more exaggerated antics than those performed by the boys. Some were prowling round on all fours after the manner of the mountain cat. Some were lumbering round after the manner of the bear. One lay and crawled on his belly like a serpent. Another had rolled himself in a ball, and was going head over heels over the ground. Another was walking on his hands, carrying a tomahawk in his mouth.

Brebeuf had heard that madmen, true or feigned, were as numerous among the Neutrals as medicine men among the Nipissings, but he hoped he and his companions had not come on their village headquarters. Knowing that these lunatics were permitted licence for every kind of outrage, and could blame any misdeed on the dictate of the demon by whom they were supposed to be possessed, he led his companions by another entry into the village. But here still another surprise awaited the Frenchmen.

For terror had gone before them and the savages ran as they arrived and closed the doors of their cabins. The word had already gone forth that Echon, master of all the sorcerers, and most destructive of demons, had come to the land of the Attiwandarons to strike and to slay. On every hand the cry resounded that "famine and disease have come." Had

the two French domestics not been able to interest in their wares some savages whom they encountered and who offered their hospitality to them and the Fathers, the chances were that they would have had to spend the night in the woods.

The next day they reached the village of Aronta, where Tsohahissen, chief captain of the country, lived, and although the captain was away at war, Father Brebeuf was able to meet the Old Men in council, and outline his mission to them.

"We seek," he said, "to teach this gospel, which we have explained to you, through the extent of these territories, and by this means to form between the French and you a special alliance. In evidence of which we offer to you this present of two thousand porcelain beads, which we desire that you will use on behalf of your people."

When Father Brebeuf had finished the Old Men talked for a while together, and then he who presided got up and spoke. The Frenchmen could not help but notice the absence of cordiality.

"We are sorry to have to tell you," said the chief of the Old Men, "that since the chief of the Attiwandaron country is at present in foreign lands engaged in war, we are not able to accept your present. We would much prefer to wait till Tsohahissen has returned to us. For if we accepted your presents, we would have to make other presents in return, and this we are unable to do. In the meantime leave is given to you freely to go through the country as you have requested to be permitted to do, to give therein such instruction as you please."

All this appeared quite favourable to Brebeuf ; but before beginning the work of instruction he led the domestics out of the country, considering that the pretext of trade, having served its initiatory purpose, would no longer be required.

But having returned, and the pretext of trade being no longer available, he found a great misunderstanding about the character of their mission and that a thousand calumnies were being stirred up against him.

It soon became known to Brebeuf that a number of the most active of his enemies among the Hurons had followed him into the Neutral country to repeat there the accusations made at Ossossane and Tenaustaye. Huron emissaries whom he met were quite candid with Father Brebeuf, and accused him of preparing the way for a transference of the trade between the French and the Hurons to the Neutrals along the more direct way of the waters of Ontario of the Iroquois.

"We warn thee, Echon," they said, "to beware of this undertaking, as there was no other cause than that for the murder of one of your Frenchmen some years ago in the Neutral country. This visit of thine has caused much uneasiness among the Hurons."

"But thou art as well aware as I am that it is not trade that we seek," answered Father Brebeuf, "but the spread of Christian knowledge. The small trading that we have done was intended merely to pave the way for our entry into the country."

"That may be so, but whether thou so intend it or not, our trade will go to the Neutrals, should this mission of thine be successful. The Hurons aroused the Neutrals against thy brother, Anwennen, years ago, and they will do the same to thee."

Father Brebeuf understood this as a reference to Father La Roche Daillon, the Recollet, who had preceded them in preaching among the Attiwandarons. The Hurons, apprehensive of a transference of trade, spread among the Neutrals the report that the Recollet was a great magician, in league

with the plague, and capable of infecting the air of the whole country with a noisome vapour that might slay them all. This caused the good Recollet endless trouble, and his work, though it had been very well launched, was brought to a nullity.

A number of the reports propagated by Huron agents were carried to the ears of Father Brebeuf. It was related of Echon, for example, that when he had set foot in the Huron land for the first time he had said : " I shall be here so many winters, during which I shall cause many to die, and then I shall go elsewhere to do the same, until I have ruined the whole land."

It was said that his real object in going to the Neutral country was to make presents of porcelain collars and arrow-heads to the neighbouring Iroquois that they might complete the ruin of both the Huron and Neutral countries. It was reported that at the burial of Chiwatenhwa, " pearl of the Christians," killed by Seneca warriors of the Iroquois confederacy, Echon had turned in the direction of the Iroquois country, and said in a loud voice, " Seneca, it is all over with thee, thou art dead," and that henceforth the disease raged fiercely among the five Nations in the valley of the Mohawk.

Foremost among the Huron envoys was one Awenhokwi, who, in company with another Huron, kept on the track of the Fathers through the Neutral villages and disseminated accusations against them. It greatly surprised Father Brebeuf, when he met the two agents in a cabin at Ounontisaston, the capital village of the Neutrals, that Awenhokwi displayed the utmost cordiality towards him.

The Huron was a nephew of one of the chief captains of the Attignenonaghac, or Nation of the Cord, and carried insignia to indicate his rank. He was small in stature, but

extremely wiry, and spoke rapidly, with suppressed excitement, and with his mouth always open, a trait pronounced in his case, but peculiar to all his people, from the absence of labials in the Huron-Iroquois tongue. His least prepossessing feature was his eye, the glitter of which was enhanced by a slight cast, and which opened and closed like that of a bird of prey.

The Huron was sitting in the midst of a circle of savages and talking volubly to them, when the two Fathers entered in the hope that they might find lodging for the night.

Awenhokwi immediately arose and came forward.

"Well, well, Echon, how fares it with thee?" he said, effusively. "I am most happy to see thee. I had heard that thou wert in the Neutral country and hoped that my friend and I who are here for trade might run across thee."

"It is agreeable to meet people from what is your home in the land of the stranger," answered the Father.

"It is indeed," was the response. "Thou hast done well to come to the land of the Neutrals, for thou canst here add to the work that thou hast accomplished among the Hurons."

The two Fathers were sensible of a slight stir among the savages as the Huron made the last remark, but when Father Brebeuf turned to look at them each was sitting motionless as a marble statue.

"It is our hope," said the Father, "that we will be able to bring some knowledge of God to this people and thus pave the way for the general conversion of the country."

"How fares it with thy mission?" pursued the Huron. "Do the Neutrals show great willingness to receive thy teaching?"

"At first they showed some willingness, but now they have become unwilling, I am sorry to say," answered the Jesuit. "The false reports given out against us have caused

this change. We hope in time that we will be able to show how untrue they are."

The savage host and his squaw and maidens now offered the two travellers the hospitality of the country. They did so in perfect silence, beyond a perfunctory "Ho! ho! ho!". The Fathers also, after some expressions of appreciation, being greatly overcome with weariness, said little, and occupied themselves with the tasks which needed to be done, but in such a way as not to arouse the suspicion of the savages, who, they were well aware, were watching their every move, while pretending to be otherwise engaged. Breviaries, paper, pens, inkstands, were all instruments of sorcery in the eyes of the Neutrals, and so they could neither read nor write.

The two Fathers, while discussing the journey that was to be undertaken the next day, watched one of the maidens extract the oil from the seeds of sunflowers, reducing them first to meal which she placed in boiling water, from the surface of which she later skimmed the floating oil with bark spoons. The mush was made into cakes which the Fathers found palatable. Without moving from the places where they had eaten, seated on plaited rush mats or spruce boughs, the savages one by one fell asleep with the children and women in a circle round the fire, as was their custom, in winter. The Fathers sought slumber as soon as they were able, for they desired to be on the way again before daybreak.

They were surprised when they started on their journey again to meet Awenhokwi and his companion at the cabin door. He at once greeted Father Brebeuf and asked him in what direction he was going.

"We are going in the direction of Teotongniaton, and afterwards to Kandoucho," answered the Father.

"Echon, I beg of thee that thou wilt come in the direction that we are going," said the Huron. "Thy company and the company of thy brother will be most agreeable to us. We ourselves are going all the way to the village of Onguiaarha, but we have friends in the intervening villages whom we will make known to thee and who greatly desire to hear thy word."

"No, Awenhokwi," answered Brebeuf, "we have business elsewhere. We regret that we cannot go farther into the country with thee."

But the Huron continued to invite him to go his way, actually attempting to force the Fathers to go some little way with them. Brebeuf was surprised at his insistence, and gently disengaged himself from his grasp. As he did so he noticed that behind the back of Awenhokwi and his companion one of the maidens was making mute signs to him, indicating to him that he should not yield to the importunities of the Huron. This strengthened the suspicion of the Father, reinforced by other circumstances, that Awenhokwi had evil intentions in view.

CHAPTER XXV

“THE AGWA ARE COMING”

THE two Fathers, the minute they were free from the Hurons, strode off through the village. They had not gone many paces when the maiden they had noticed at the door of her cabin ran after them calling.

“Echon,” she said to the Father, “I want to tell thee that the Huron is thy enemy and not thy friend. Hadst thou gone on the way with him thou and thy brother would most assuredly have been killed. He was telling our men that he had warriors hired to kill thee only last night.”

The Fathers thanked the girl for her kind interest in their behalf, and offered her some small trinket as a reward, but she sped away without accepting it from them.

“I had but little faith in Awenhokwi from the beginning,” said Father Brebeuf, as they continued their journey. “It was very evident that he was not telling the truth.”

“He spoke of going to Onguiaarha,” said Father Chaumonot. “Do you think a Huron would really venture to go there, as he says, for trade?”

“We know very well he would not,” answered the older priest. “Onguiaarha is beyond the celebrated river of that name. It is the last of all the Neutral villages and only one day’s journey from the villages of the Iroquois. A Huron who ventured where the woods were full of Iroquois would assuredly be taking his life in his hands.”

As the two Fathers went from one village to another they encountered ample evidence of the machinations of Awenhokwi against them. In truth he had been everywhere and stopped at nothing. Father Brebeuf learnt a great deal about a council of the Old Men in which Awenhokwi with extraordinary vehemence had urged the Neutrals to murder both of the Fathers.

"If you desire life and hate death, O Ancients of our brothers of the Attiwandarons," he had said, "you will at the earliest possible moment put to death these two black robes who are here for no other purpose than to bring on you the calamities they have brought on the Attignaouentans, and the Arendarrhonons and Attignenonaghac who are your brothers among the Hurons. Will you wait till the air of your country is foul with the pestilence which they exhale and propagate? Will you wait till your children and your young warriors are falling around you? Do you want to sit alone in your cabins, mourning in silence your dead ones, whose eyeless skeletons will reproach you at your feasts? We are sent here by the councils of our Old Men because they love you and they do not want to see you suffer the dire calamities which have fallen on our nation. We have no other motive in coming to you."

At Kandoucho, where the Fathers had received the best reception of all, one of the chief captains told Father Brebeuf concerning this council.

"Awenhokwi," he said, "declared to us that he had been sent by the captains and Old Men of Tenaustaye, the Huron village to which he belongs, with presents of nine hatchets, which he displayed, in order to inform the Neutrals that they should beware of the two Frenchmen if they did not want to see the country ruined. He said moreover that if the Neutrals did not kill them, they would be killed

immediately on their return to the Huron country; and that there would have been a general massacre of the Frenchmen before this had they not prudently gathered themselves together in their new and powerful stone and timbered stronghold at Sainte Marie in the heart of the Huron country."

"Awenhokwi showed himself very friendly to us when we met at Ounontisaston," replied Father Brebeuf. "In short he showed us a thousand attentions and greatly desired that we should accompany him on his way deeper into the country."

"His friendly overtures were in no wise sincere," answered the Neutral. "From what I have heard you were to be ambushed by a party of warriors on the way and killed, and if the Neutrals refused to assume the responsibility, the murder was to be blamed on the Iroquois."

"I greatly feared that Awenhokwi had some evil design in mind," answered the Father. "But I can assure you that the method of an ambushade was taking too much trouble. We are two weak men, without arms, entirely at the mercy of anyone who desires to kill us, for there would be no resistance on our part and death indeed would be welcomed with open arms by us. There could be no quicker way from earth to the heaven for which we long. At the same time we desire to live and work for the good of the Neutral people as long as we are permitted."

As a matter of fact Father Brebeuf had come across many rumours to the effect that they had been discovered by the Iroquois and had been slain at their hands. He knew of course that such an eventuality was quite likely, for the Iroquois had shown as much bitterness against the French, who were in continual conflict with them on the St. Lawrence, as against the Hurons and Algonquins, who were the French allies.

At the same time he did not doubt that these rumours had been set afloat by Huron emissaries who desired their death in the midst of a strange nation that was hostile to them and who were everywhere inciting the Neutrals against them. Indeed it might well be that the Hurons themselves would seize this opportunity to slay them when the probability was that the guilt of the murder would be put on all sorts of people rather than on them.

In the midst of all these dark menaces the Superior pursued his course and went his way with the composure that was habitual to him. While he walked in the midst of hundreds that meditated his murder not a hair of his head was touched. He spoke as openly and with as much affection to his enemies as to those who showed an interest in his message.

His vast reputation as the most powerful of all the magicians ever seen paralysed the arm of many a stealthy assassin. His commanding stature, the grave nobility of his countenance, his air of grace and power and infinite gentleness commingled, disarmed many who beyond his presence and the benign influence radiated from his eyes had been concocting evil schemes against him. And everywhere he carried round with him the prestige of the French, of *Sieur de Champlain* whose name was still great among the Neutrals, and of the great *Onontio* at *Quebec* who had succeeded him.

Indeed it had been very plain to the Old Men at the council of the Neutrals, which *Awenhokwi* had called, that the Huron emissary had only been restrained by fear of the authority of the French, who might put on the Hurons the responsibility for the murder of *Brebeuf*.

"Thou invitest us to commit this murder," one of the Old Men had said to *Awenhokwi*. "If these black-robcs have done in thy country all that thou sayest they have done, if

they have been responsible for famine and plague and the drought and the Iroquois and the failure of your arms in war, why have the Hurons themselves not killed them ? ”

The Old Men were by no means satisfied with the answer that Awenhokwi made to that query. It became very plain to them that the Hurons wanted the Neutrals to assume responsibility for an act which they did not dare to perpetrate themselves.

It had become known to them also that the Hurons greatly feared a transference of French trade to the Neutrals and even to the Iroquois, should there be any success to the black-robés' mission. They had, therefore, though they had not the intimate relations with the French that the Hurons had, after an all-night sitting, courteously refused the presents of Awenhokwi and told him that they had decided against the act of murder which he had counselled.

But this did not prevent the multiplication of every kind of rumour among the Neutrals any more than among the Hurons. A colleague of Awenhokwi showed himself even more shameless. This man, whose name was Oentara, went through the Neutral villages reviving for use there all the old accusations against the Fathers which had tended to die down in the Huron country.

Around the Neutral council fires and in the cabins he retold the old story of how the black-robés had reared the plague as a domestic animal in their house, and then carried its pestilential hair or fur to all the villages. He warned them to beware of their writings, which were hidden sorceries and the shrines of their black knowledge and art, by looking at which they learnt of things not present and invisible. He told them to dread the books and inkstands of the Fathers in which hordes of demons dwelt and were enclosed. He warned them to beware of the Fathers when they

prayed; for when they went on their knees, a posture unknown to the savage, and clasped their hands, and turned their eyes to the sky, they were then calling on their oki to bring desolation on the country in which they then were.

"We warn you," he said to them, "boldly to close your cabins against these two black-robcs, unless you desire your own death and the ruin of the Neutral country. Do not let them come among you. And above all beware of their presents, for they are bewitched and they will cause you to die as they have brought the Hurons to their death."

On one occasion Father Brebeuf, having learnt that Oentara at that very moment was present at a council of the Old Men in the village at which he had arrived, surprised them by walking with his usual intrepidity right into their midst. Oentara was greatly taken aback when he suddenly saw the tall black-robe confronting him. He showed himself extremely brazen, however, and repeated all he had said with much gesticulation in the presence of the Father. The Father very pertinently refuted every accusation made by the Huron agent and plainly covered him with confusion. But he saw very clearly that it was a difficult thing to cleanse the minds of those poor barbarians of poisons and suspicions rising like vapours in hearts that knew little and dreaded everything with which they were unfamiliar.

The Fathers soon found that Awenhokwi and Oentara were only the leaders of an army of Huron traducers who had followed them among the Attiwandarons, determined to prejudice the success of their mission. Indeed they inspired the Neutral chiefs with so many dark suspicions that, instead of waiting for the return of Tsohahissen, the chief captain of the country, as they had decided, they sent for Father Brebeuf and Father Chaumonot, and informed them

in council that, since the matter had come to be regarded as pressing, they had decided not to accept the gifts tendered by the Fathers and that their mission to that extent would be unlawful in the country.

This council was held at Ounontisaston, the capital village of the Neutral country. The Old Men sat motionless as statues as the president of the council announced their decision. There was hardly a friendly eye among them, as they watched the Fathers through the smoke of the council fire which had turned almost completely black the shroudless skeletons of former chieftains, ornamented with trinkets and feathers of the wild turkey, which gaped from the walls and roof.

When the president had finished Father Brebeuf spoke.

"The giving of presents was by no means our primary object in coming to your country," he said. "We brought you the presents to show you our goodwill and we would have been very happy to have had you receive them. But we have come here first of all to have the opportunity of giving you a knowledge of the Christian faith. We would like to know whether in refusing the presents we have tendered to you, you mean to convey to us also that you will refuse to accept our teaching."

"No, my nephew," answered the ancient, "the two things are different. In so far as thou hast explained thy teaching to us and the commandments of thy faith we find therein nothing but what is good. But as for thy presents, we refuse them absolutely."

"That is well," answered Brebeuf. "We are very glad to have your goodwill in our work of teaching throughout your country. However we regret that you will not receive our presents. We would be obliged to you if you would tell us why our presents have been refused."

"Is that necessary?" asked the president.

"No, it is hardly necessary," replied the Father. "But we have been sent to your country, and we have been commissioned to give these presents to you. When we go back we will be obliged to render an account of why they have been refused."

"Well," was the response, "one reason is that our treasury is at present depleted, and that we have not the means of making a present in return."

"If that is the whole cause," said Father Brebeuf, "you ought to have no difficulty in accepting the presents. We desire no compensation or reward of any kind in return in the way of material things. It will be enough for us that you regard us as brothers."

"That may be," answered the president. "However, we refuse the gifts. The council has come to that decision and will abide by it."

"Then you have reasons which you do not desire to give?" asked the Father.

At this point the president began to show some indignation and the concentric circles of senators who sat around in the semi-darkness stirred uneasily.

"Our reasons are various," said the president, raising his voice. "We have discussed this matter on several occasions and through many all-night sittings and we have had as our advisers agents from the country in which thou livest."

"Thou referrest to Awenhokwi? Is not that so?" asked the Father.

"It is true that we have consulted with Awenhokwi and with others of the Hurons. They possess knowledge which we have otherwise no means of discovering."

"What Awenhokwi and other Hurons have said and what they know are two different things," answered the Father.

"They have accused us of sorcery and of spreading the malady, two things which I am quite sure they themselves do not believe. As a matter of fact Awenhokwi and the other Huron emissaries in this country have other and very strong reasons for desiring the failure of our mission among the Neutrals, but they do not reveal those reasons to you."

"Well now," said the president, "since thou speakest of Awenhokwi, dost thou know what Awenhokwi came here to do? And dost thou know besides the danger in which thou standest at this present hour and in which thou art placing the country?"

"My brother and I are well aware what the machinations of Awenhokwi were intended to effect. We are well aware of the evil designs against us. But we do not know in what way our death would benefit the Neutral people, since we have come among them with a design only to teach them the truths which all the French believe and desire nothing in return from them. On the other hand our death if perpetrated here would be likely to do them more evil than good, and the shame of such a deed would be carried alike on the faces of the murderers and of their children."

To this the president made a perfunctory reply. Father Brebeuf saw that further discussion was useless at that time and so the two Fathers withdrew.

The result of the council was clearly far from favourable. Brebeuf did not consider that their expulsion from the country was desired, but he saw that if they had found trouble in the villages before they would now find more trouble than ever.

Had they been traders their way would have been greatly smoothed, for their goods would have excited not only the cupidity and interest, but also the wonder of the savages. But they were the purveyors of spiritual goods which had

no meaning whatever to the savages, and which on the contrary were surrounded in their eyes with mysterious appurtenances which their imaginations could easily be led to believe were full of all sorts of evil.

The savages had never heard of God or of heaven or hell, or angel or saint. They did not know what a church or a bible or a book or writing or reading meant. When it came to explaining scripture they had never seen a sheep, or swine, or a horse, or wheat, or wine. Imparting to them a whole different world of knowledge would have been difficult under the most favourable circumstances. With their fears and suspicions aroused, and with the messengers of the new faith associated in their minds with the greatest of the evils that afflicted them, the task became hard indeed.

When the two Fathers journeyed forth again the worst of their forebodings were realized. No sooner did they approach a village than there was widespread tumult. The Huron calumniators of the Fathers had done their work well, and the direst apprehensions of the villagers had been everywhere aroused. Brebeuf saw the scurrying of the savages towards their cabins, and on every side he heard exclamations of fear.

"The Agwa are coming. Famine and disease are entering the village. Back to your cabins everybody and fasten your doors."

This was what the Fathers heard ; and when they came to the cabins and sought to enter, according to the customary hospitality of the country, they generally found only closed doors ; and if there were some who received them, it was more often through fear or hope of gain than through any spirit of welcome.

The very sight of the Fathers, clothed and arrayed in a fashion so different from their own, their gait, their gestures,

and all their manners, appeared as confirmatory evidence of the stories concerning them which the savages had heard. They gazed in fear at their breviaries, their inkstands, and their writings. When they went to a brook to wash their dishes, a thing the savages never did, they were said to be poisoning the water. In the cabins they were accused of causing the children to cough and the women to become barren. Many in the cabins in which the Fathers lodged refused to sleep day or night or to touch the food they left ; and they brought back the presents that had been given them, fearing they would bring calamity on them and their families.

Threats were repeatedly made against them. The Fathers were menaced with the appearance of the Iroquois, who, they were told, were not far away. They were informed that since their presents had not been accepted there was no security for them in the country and that anyone was at liberty to kill and eat them. In many cabins they had to suffer much from the hostility of their hosts, who often gave them almost nothing for food and for what they did give them compelled them to pay exorbitantly.

Then the Neutrals in the capital village agreed in council that henceforth no one should give shelter to the black-robos. On the night of the decree the two Fathers, pierced with cold and faint with hunger, with the snow deep on the ground, found every door locked against them.

They wandered through Ounontisaston, knowing well that numerous savage eyes were watching them through slits in the bark walls and guarding the doors against them. Then in one rather isolated cabin they heard the sounds of revelry, and, from the shadows passing athwart the flames within, conceived the notion that some of the savages were about to depart. They drew close and watched, and when one of the Indians opened the door and came out, they

pushed by a quick movement into the abode of filth and smoke.

The inmates, aghast at their boldness, stared in silence, not knowing what to do, for the Indian law of hospitality always welcomed the stranger. Then a messenger boy ran out to spread the tidings, and an angry crowd poured into the cabin.

"You are sorcerers, who have come to our country to work your vengeance upon it. We do not want you here," said an old chief to the Fathers.

"We are not sorcerers," answered Father Brebeuf, "and we have sought to do good to you, not evil. You have been deceived by Huron emissaries."

"That is what sorcerers always say," answered the chief. "We want you to go before you begin your evil work."

"Do you call it evil work to try to teach the Neutral people the knowledge concerning this world and the next possessed by the French?" asked the Father.

"We do not object to your teaching, but to the other things you do, your witchcraft, and your magic, bringing famine and disease," said the chief.

"We are ready to pay for our food and shelter," answered Brebeuf.

"You can pay and then leave both the village and the country," was the response. "If you do not we will put you in the kettle and make a feast of you."

A chorus of menacing cries followed this last speech, and several impudent young braves pressed their swarthy faces, on which the hair descended like horses' manes, close to the faces of the Fathers.

"I have had enough of the dark-coloured meat of our enemies," shouted one. "I wish to know the taste of white meat, and I will eat yours."

Then another warrior drove through the crowd, stepped back a pace or two, drew his bow, and, pulling back the thong to its utmost length, aimed the point of an iron-headed arrow at Father Chaumonot. The Father looked at him fixedly, preparing for death the while.

But the fury of the warrior was suddenly appeased as the unwearied voice of Father Brebeuf was heard, while the savage audience gathered to hang on his lips, giving the reasons for the visit of the black-robés and for their willingness to endure all to bring the light to them.

It was by no means the first occasion on which the magnetism of Brebeuf, an influence drawn from his air of commingled gentleness and power, overcoming antagonism and enchaining interest, had repulsed the grim spectre and turned foes into friends. That night the two Fathers slept soundly, recuperating strength for the inevitable hardships and perils that everywhere beset their way in that intractable land.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE TUMULT AND THE CROSS

AT the end of four months Brebeuf and his companion had gone eastward through all the Neutral country and had come to its last straggling villages, beyond which lay the No Man's Land that divided the Neutrals from the dark country of the Iroquois, most rancorous and formidable of all the savages.

The Father, wearied beyond the limits of human endurance, his soul harassed by the obduracy of the infidels, with the obloquy and contumely of his enemies ringing in his ears, walked brokenly one day towards the enemy land, his heart and mind in a tumult, to which an Iroquois tomahawk could only have been a happy release.

Fallen timbers and tangled undergrowth, swamps and treacherous morasses bruised his limbs at every step. But his physical sufferings paled to nothingness in comparison with the tempest and desolation and warring of fire and sword within his soul. It was one of the seasons in which even spiritual comfort had left him, and, harrowed through all his being, he sought in vain for the great peace that in his deepest tribulations ordinarily came to him.

And the war within his soul was reflected also in the agitation of the exterior world. The heavens were black as night and thunderstorm followed thunderstorm. The rain fell in a torrential downpour ; an unceasing hurricane bent the giant trees and screamed in a myriad shrill voices

through a hundred square leagues of unbroken forest ; stroke after stroke of lightning lit up the black universe continually in a spectral light.

The two black-robed figures stumbled forward, alone in the world, deserted by God and man, at the bottom of a tempest-tossed sea.

From the midst of the desolation in which they stood Father Brebeuf looked towards the black concave of gloom above them in the direction of the east. Forked lightning tore unending fissures in the heavens, but nowhere more than in the great bank of clouds that hung over the land of the Iroquois.

In vision he beheld the heavens there alive with the warring hosts of heaven and of hell. He saw the serried ranks of demons and the hosts of angels and of saints. He saw St. Michael and his sword confronting the dragons of ignorance and heathenism and the evils of the world.

And he saw in spirit a great cross of fire athwart the heavens on which whole nations were crucified, and foremost among the victims the faces of himself and all who ministered to the peoples of those savage lands. And the figures that nailed those nations and those who taught them and ministered to them were not the figures of demons, but the figures of the Iroquois above whose bark roofs that great cross of blue fire hung ; and when he saw that cross peace at last came to him, for that cross had been the goal of his ambition all along, and the guarantee of the salvation of himself and all he loved.

Then the tempest ceased, and as the Fathers sought sleep on a bed of boughs in the depth of the woods the sky cleared and the stars shone in a cloudless sky. But a great phenomenon impressed their senses during all the hours of the night. For though all the clouds had dispersed and the air had

become wondrously bright and clear, a gentle roll of thunder, like the beating of ten thousand drums, filled all the forest, without the respite of a second, without the diminution of a single roll of sound, till it appeared to the Fathers that the stars in the heavens, and the acorns and branches on the trees, danced with tremulous grace to the unearthly music. Wet and bedraggled as they were, that volume of deep sound greatly soothed them, and too wearied to explore the astonishing mystery, they slept almost to sunrise.

They opened their eyes on a morning of surpassing beauty, the air crisp and cool, the sky a deep cerulean blue. They ate with the relish of hunger a portion of bread they carried with them, baked under the cinders after the manner of the country, and some peas steeped in water. But still in their ears against the cries and pipings of the forest sounded that marvellous thunder, soft, smooth, muffled, rolling, deeply flowing, the consonance of a great enchantment among the mysteries of nature ; and they conjectured as to its locality and cause.

"To me it sounds like water falling from a great height," said Father Brebeuf. "A similar thunder is heard at that battle-ground of waters on the river of the Ottawas which the savages call the Kettle and which we French call the Chaudière. But this sound is on a much greater scale."

"It comes from the direction of the Iroquois," said his companion.

"If so it has doubtless been of service as an obstacle between us and the enemy," answered the older Jesuit. "On that score alone it will be worth our while to see it."

"Are we not now in the vicinity of the Onguiaarha River, of which the savages have so often spoken ? " asked Father Chaumonot.

"I do not think we can be far from either the river or the village of that name, which is the easternmost of the Neutral hamlets. The storm yesterday drove us a good deal out of our way. We shall find our location presently."

The two Jesuits now took up the forest trail in the direction from which the mysterious sound came. They had not gone a great distance before it appeared to them that the edge of the forest was not far away, and that beyond it lay the region of a great open space. The thunder increased its volume with every step, and they had now no doubt that they were going to be the discoverers of some great waterfall in the midst of the river which connected the inland seas of the Ehriehronnons and Hurons with the great lake of the Iroquois. Very soon the edge of the forest was reached and a heart-subduing spectacle met their eyes.

Beneath them lay the deep gorge of a great river in which the waters raced and battled in a tumult far surpassing any cascade or rapids they had yet seen. The walls of the gorge were steep as the precipices on the sides of the great ocean, deeply clothed with verdure at their summits, built like the battlements of the greatest stronghold ever seen, with layer upon layer of primeval stone, red or yellow as sand baked by the sun.

The Fathers struggled up the gorge on the edge of the cliffs to get a better view of the cataract which they now knew to be quite near, the source of those wildly struggling waters. But they were little prepared for the spectacle that filled their souls with an astonishment beyond words.

For before them they saw a river that looked a mile wide pour its water through rising clouds of mist over precipices even higher than those on which they stood. It was as though the vast shimmering river and perpendicular veil of water issued from the heavens themselves, pouring a new beauty on

the earth, and forming a Jacob's ladder or pathway of light, fringed by dark primeval forests, to the great white throne. They now knew the meaning of the thunder that had been in their ears since the storm had abated on the preceding day, and they felt that a great secret of this new world of the savages had been revealed to them.

"Look, my brother," said Father Brebeuf to his companion, "on a sight as great as any mortal eye has yet seen. We dwell in a land which nature has built on a larger scale than in Europe."

"Where can all that water come from?" queried the younger priest.

"It comes from the lake of the Hurons with which we are so familiar," answered Brebeuf, "as the lake of the Hurons receives its waters from other larger seas as yet unknown to us. All this water which we are now watching will go through the Ontario of the Iroquois and will then be borne past our Quebec to the sea."

For hours the Fathers explored the great fall of waters. They watched till their eyes grew dim and their heads dizzy the whirlpools far down beneath their feet. They shuddered as they thought of human beings carried away in the dreadful flood. They trembled at the thought of being carried over the throat of that mighty river, which drank in an hour more water than lay in the bed of entire rivers in their own land.

They felt that they had looked on a sight which, whatever the failure of their mission on the spiritual side, had alone been worth the journey to the Neutral country to see. And at last, with reluctant feet, they turned from the glory that held their vision as the gateway to eternal bliss, to retrace the path of savagery and gloom along which they had come.

Brebeuf had decided to return to the frontier village of Kandoucho, at the other end of the Neutral country, and there await the coming of spring and the Frenchmen from Sainte Marie, who were to bring them home again. They had made a circuit through half the country, when at Teotongniaton, surnamed St. Guillaume by them on their first visit, a heavy snowstorm made it impossible for them to go further.

There was nothing to be done by them but to seek the cabins of the savages again, and this they did with little hope, expecting to see the usual signs of dread at their presence. To their surprise they were received with open arms by the squaw of the first cabin entered by them. She was a young mother, gentle and well-favoured, with a brood of children, and her dark eyes sparkled with pleasure as she gave the two famished Fathers hot sagamité to eat and busied herself to make them comfortable.

"Sit with us and eat," was the woman's first greeting. "The storm is violent and we thought the wind was going to tear our cabin down. I and the children have been sitting here listening to the spirits of the air moaning and weeping in their sorrow."

"Thou art very kind," said Father Brebeuf. "We could go no more, and greatly appreciate thy hospitality."

But voices in expostulation were heard from another quarter of the cabin where another family lived.

"Onetta," called a tall savage, coming forward with his elk skin blanket covering his mouth and ears. "I wonder at thee. Hast thou no fear of the black-robcs and their sorceries? Dost thou desire all thy children to die?"

"No," answered the kindly squaw. "I have no fear. Their looks are kind and they will do my children no harm."

"It is well seen that thy father is a sorcerer, as is very well known," was the answer. "But thou wilt have to answer to the captains, if misfortune befall us."

The news quickly spread through Teotongniaton that the village was sheltering the Frenchmen, and a continual procession of savages came to tell Onetta that she would be required to drive away the long gowns and generally to intimidate her. Threats were uttered about killing and eating the black-robos, and madmen, genuine and feigned, were sent to torment them.

On the second day after their arrival three of the maniacs suddenly entered, naked as worms, and barked and prowled around the Fathers, tearing at their cassocks with their teeth and scattering the burning faggots in their direction. They were followed by other naked madmen and madwomen who squatted on the earth beside the Fathers, grasped their pouches and ransacked them, and then fled with the contents.

Then one of the savages in the cabin with them began to feign madness and to spit on Father Chaumonot, tearing his cassock and attempting to burn it, and accusing both of the Fathers of seeking to bring death and every imaginable misfortune on them. In the course of all these outrages Onetta, the squaw, defended the Fathers with all her might and evinced great sorrow and sympathy with them in their tribulations.

She had been watching their actions narrowly and conversing with them, and Brebeuf was astonished at the skill with which she refuted the calumnies uttered against them.

"All thou sayest is the merest imposture," she said to one medicine man who came, charcoaled and painted and wearing his mantle of bearskin, to abuse the black-robos.

"Death will come to thee and desolation to thy family," the medicine man said to her.

"And if they do, what matter?" was the cool reply. "It is a common thing for men to die, and death I expect sometime. But thou who art talking in this way art in reality he who is attempting to bewitch me and my children and causing us to die. And indeed I would prefer to expose myself and my family to the danger of death than send away these black-robcs at a time when they might perish in the snow."

The children, following the example of their mother, vied with one another in rendering the Fathers a thousand kind services and never wearied of talking to them. Not only that, they fought in their defence with the youths from other cabins who came to molest the Fathers. In the midst of all the hubbub the father of the squaw arrived from the chase, and he also took a great liking to the black-robcs, so that their enemies ceased to molest them from that time forth.

The Fathers remained nearly four weeks in the cabin of the good squaw and they made good use of their time, for when they left they could both talk the Neutral dialect of the Huron-Iroquois language quite fluently. The squaw took rare pleasure in instructing them, uttering the words syllable by syllable, so that they could give them appropriate letters, and they also took down entire narratives from her mouth. At the end of the month they had completed a harmony of a dictionary and syntax of the Neutral and Huron tongues, which they felt sure would be of great benefit to future missionaries and explorers.

Meanwhile the Fathers at the mission headquarters of Sainte Marie, receiving no letters from the Neutral country, felt that something was wrong. The fear communicated

itself to the Christian Hurons at Ossossane and they organized an expedition of relief. It was led by two French domestics from Sainte Marie, who found the Fathers and brought them back after eight days of travel and fatigue in the forest.

It was regarded as a special providence by Father Brebeuf that one of the domestics who came to their rescue in the Neutral country was marked by the smallpox. This disabused the Neutrals of the belief they had conceived that the French were undying demons and masters of maladies which they distributed at their pleasure. Many of the savages displayed much remorse over the treatment the Fathers had received, and as they passed through the country on the return journey the captains vied with each other in honouring them and offering the hospitality of their cabins.

The change in their demeanour consoled Father Brebeuf and gave him hope of a time when the Neutral country would be more open to light and visitation from on high.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE HEATHENS RAGE

A TIME came when Brebeuf saw the Hurons enjoying perfect health again and the fruits of great and prosperous harvests, so that they ceased to rebuff the Fathers and to cast lowering looks upon them.

Good fortune had come to the aborigines on almost every side. The waters furnished them with shoals of fish ; the trade with distant nations brought them gain ; the summer canoes, descending to Three Rivers and Quebec, found, through the measures against the Iroquois on the St. Lawrence taken by Sieur de Montmagny, the road free of ambuscades ; and French wares, the commerce in which the Iroquois had almost destroyed, began to flood the Huron land again to the great joy of the people.

By that time the Fathers, distributed in seven missions, had carried their message to over seventeen thousand barbarians of diverse tribes in and around the Huron country. There was not a village or a hamlet, a cabin or a fireside, which they could approach, where they did not discharge this duty ; and if they did not see all the conversions they desired, they had at least the consolation of finding in the minds of the savages more inclination to hear them than in former years.

As time went on there was hardly a town of the Hurons that had not its flock of faithful, large or small, whose fervour, constancy and good works promised to leaven the

whole population. The Fathers, now ranking as principal chiefs in council, saw the infant Huron Christendom growing steadily in numbers and devotedness, and visibly bearing the marks of the elect.

The savagery of many of the Hurons had given place to an innocence seldom witnessed in any land. Never before had the audiences in the villages and cabins been so large. To the Fathers, hearkening to the orisons of their little flocks which they always uttered aloud, and watching with bedewed eyes their blameless lives, it appeared evident that blessedness and grace had taken possession of those simple hearts, whose fidelity was turning the land into an Eden.

It was a great consolation to the missionaries, now numbering nearly a score and scattered during the greater part of the year in the major missions taking in all the towns and villages, to be able to repair to the new central residence of Sainte Marie, where engaging in spiritual exercises in tranquillity of soul, holding conferences and exchanging counsel, they gathered new vigour for their work.

To Sainte Marie went also Huron neophytes for temporary retreat, while great crowds repaired there also from the towns around over distances of many leagues to pass Sunday in proper devotion, being fed and lodged by the Fathers from Saturday to Monday morning. To the Hurons the Jesuit chapel at Sainte Marie, with the accumulation of stone buildings around it and containing half a hundred Frenchmen, was one of the wonders of the world, and masses, sermons, processions, vespers, and benediction were there celebrated with a magnificence the eyes of the savages had never beheld.

Warriors, young and old, joined the faithful in a continuous stream.

The heathens nevertheless remained powerful, and while the new Christendom grew, the pendulum swung strongly against the converts as well as for them and the old reproaches were still heard. The unbelievers asserted that the black-robcs subverted the country; that the sick were deprived of the remedial feasts, dances and games that succoured them; that war was increasing its ravages; that famine threatened them; that the most harmless amusements were now called crimes and could hardly be indulged in; that wherever the new Christians happened to be other people had to blush with shame and imagine everything was a sin.

The heathens said their ancestors, who did not know the black-robcs, never lived in such restraint, never heard of sin, and indulged themselves just as they pleased, and that in those days the country was flourishing and the oki and demons were on their side; that misfortunes had multiplied in their midst with all this new talk of a God and a paradise and a hell which nobody had ever seen; that the new Christians ought either to withdraw and live in their own way, or should retain the new doctrine in their own souls without publicly condemning the customs and pleasures received from their forefathers; that they should be invited no more to the councils and feasts, with which they interfered; and that either relations with them should be broken or that a general council should force them to renounce the new belief which opposed the chief pleasures of the country.

The grand masters of the remedial Aoutaeroihi dance, the most celebrated in its power over the demons of the graver ills of the flesh, in which naked men and women officiated in nocturnal mysteries and ceremonies, inspired and sacrosanct and revealed only to its hierophants, alarmed over the

defection of the initiated to the faith of the black-robés, decided, after secret councils, to restore by heroic measures the enfeebled brotherhood.

To every errant warrior or maiden, become catechumen or neophyte in the service of Him who made the earth and the sky, leading officers of the mysteries gave the alternative of reconsecration to the healing demon dance or death by tomahawk and scalping knife under an Iroquois disguise.

Where threats failed, stratagem was employed ; and troops of naked braves, oiled, painted and feathered, were commissioned to entice the apostate sisters, and companies of naked vestals, their greased tresses garlanded, to make war on the hearts of former warriors of the mysteries, now slaves to the black-gowns, and false to their most sacred oaths and the inspired revelations that had been communicated to them.

In every town the grand masters and the medicine men, with promises, with threats and with presents, solicited the new neophytes to renounce their new belief ; and then, to sap the foundations of the spreading faith, prophets and sorcerers made circuit of the country to reveal the secret knowledge which the demons and their pontiffs had made known to them in their tabernacles by the mountains and the lakes.

Tigarougich, chief of the famous sorcerers by the waters of the Nipissings, went through the cabins in the chief towns of the Nation of the Bear, and pointing to the totems and armorial devices laboriously painted as lares and penates on the stockade and cabin walls, beseeched all to maintain fidelity to their ancestral ways.

"Do not swallow so readily," he declaimed, cutting the air in circles with his mystic medicine staff, "these delusions of the black-robés, which are destroying all the pleasures

of life among you. And to show you how you are being deceived, let me tell you of some Algonquins who recently returned from a very long journey, in which having gone astray in countries till now unknown, they found very populous cities, inhabited only by the souls which lived a life such as you and your ancestors lived.

"They returned to say that they had there heard wonders, and had been assured and discovered that all this talk of paradise and hell were simple fables. They found indeed that souls were immortal, but that at exit from their bodies they saw themselves at once at liberty and gained entirely new bodies, more vigorous than the first, and a more blissful country; and thus our souls at death leave their bodies in the manner of tribes like yours who abandon a cabin and an exhausted soil in order to seek another, newer and more productive."

And then Sondarouan, presiding officer in the fire mystery and the ceremony of mystic mating, the sovereign cure for diseases of the skin and the unseating of the brain, prophet also and medicine man in the Nation of the Deer, revealed to the four nations of the Hurons, that Iouskeha, son of Aataentsic, had descended from his kingdom above the sky and materialized before him in the depth of the woods.

"I beheld before my eyes," he said, "a phantom of prodigious size, who told me that this God of whom the black-robés speak was totally unknown to him, and was getting the credit that was due to him. He bore in one hand ears of yellow corn and in the other a great abundance of fish; and he said to me:

" 'It is I alone who have created men, who have taught them to till the earth, and who have stocked all the lakes and seas with fish, so that nothing may fail for the livelihood

of men. These I recognize as my children, although they do not yet recognize me as their father any more than an infant in the cradle, who has not judgment enough to know those to whom he owes all that he is and has for the support of life. But the souls of men separated from their bodies will have greater knowledge and render me the honours I deserve. Then will I increase my love and care of them and do good to all.'

"So spake that great phantom to me," continued Sondarouan, "and he said that the hell, of which the black-robcs speak, with its fires and its torments beneath the earth, was an entirely false notion, intended merely to terrify the Hurons that they might do their bidding."

Then Tondertisiko, pontiff of the village of souls, reputed to spend half the year in the realms of the dead, came forward with a story that spread consternation even among the congregations of the neophytes.

"To my eyes in the dead of night," he proclaimed, "when all was still and only I and the spirits of the air held communion, there appeared a Huron Christian woman, whom the black robes had named Felicia, who had been buried in the cemetery at Sainte Marie and who had risen again. To my ears she uttered the word that the French were all the greatest of impostors, who were among the Hurons merely to deceive them. She informed me that her soul, having left her body, had actually been carried up to the heaven of which the black-robcs speak and that indeed the French had welcomed her there. But the welcome was not of the kind she had expected ; for they had received her in the manner in which the Huron captive is received on his entrance into an Iroquois village—with sticks and tomahawks, with burning torches and red hot irons, with cruelties and torments inconceivable."

She had related that all heaven was nothing but fire, of which the sun was a part, and that there the satisfaction of the French was to burn their victims, and that in order to possess many of these captive souls, which were the objects of their pleasures, they crossed the seas, and came into these regions as into a land of conquest, just as a Huron or an Iroquois exposed himself with joy to the fatigues and dangers of war to bring back some captive.

It was further said that those who were thus burned in heaven were the Huron and Algonquin Christians, and that those who had been unwilling to become slaves to the French went after this life into a place of delights, where everything good abounded and evil was banished.

"The risen woman," declared the medicine man, "having been tormented in the French heaven for a day, that seemed longer than years, a celestial being, moved with compassion, aroused her in the night, and, having broken her bonds, showed her a deep valley that descended to the earth, which led to that place of delights whither infidel Hurons went, and from afar she saw their villages and fields and heard their happy voices as of people who feasted and danced; but she had returned to the earth to warn her tribe of what awaited them if they believed in the impostures of the French."

This tale was endlessly retold in every cabin from the Nipissings to the falls of Onguiaarha, and excited much feeling against the Fathers.

At St. Michel, among the Tohontenraet, where the number and fervour of the neophytes brought into being a lasting residence and mission under the charge of Father Chaumonot and Father du Peron, as at Ossossane and Tenaustaye, Agwachimagan, an Algonquin captain from Allumette Islands, and a firebrand against the black-robcs, led the opposition to the growing church.

"My brothers," he declaimed around the council fire to which numerous catechumens had been invited, "I have always had as much love for you as I have had hate for the Iroquois, our common enemies, whose cruelty I experienced, as you know, last year, when I was their prisoner on two occasions and escaped each time from their hands, when they were about to burn me alive."

"Ho! ho! ho!" was the response from the squatting audience.

"Well," went on the Algonquin, "I learn that your village is moved by the discourses of the black-robcs, that several have already received baptism; that a larger number desire it; and that you yourselves lend ear to discourses that, in truth, wonderfully charm everyone in the beginning; for they promise you all everlasting joy in a paradise far above the earth and the end of all your pain.

"But you are doubtless ignorant, my brothers, of what all these promises of eternal life really tend to in the end. I have been among the French at Quebec and at the Three Rivers. There they taught me the very substance of all their doctrines; and thus I have come to know everything that can be known pertaining to these matters of the faith they preach. But I have to confess to you that the more I looked into their mysteries the less clearly was I able to see. For I came to the conclusion that all their teaching merely related to fables, unworthy of belief by any man of sense. They are all invented to inspire us with fears of an imaginary fire and with the false hope of a good that can never come to us, so that we are led to involve ourselves in inevitable dangers.

"I am not talking to you without experience of that which I am talking about. Some years ago you saw the Algonquins in such numbers that we were the terror of our enemies.

Now we are reduced to nothing ; disease has exterminated us ; war has decimated us ; famine pursues us, wherever we go. And it is the faith taught by these long robes that has brought all these afflictions upon us."

At this point Atondo, a recent convert, rose and interrupted the Algonquin.

"The faith has had nothing to do with our misfortunes," he said. "If it is destroying us, how is it it has not destroyed the French ?"

"Wait a moment," the other replied. "That you may know that what I say is true, when I went down to Quebec two years ago to see what had been the result of the faith of the Montagnais and Algonquins there who had received baptism, what did they show me ? They showed me a house full of one-eyed, lame, crippled, and blind persons, of fleshless skeletons, of people who carried death on their countenances."

"He speaks of the hospital at Quebec," interrupted Atondo. "It is true we would not have seen such people because by now they would all be dead. It is the kindness of the French that keeps them alive where we would kill them, even though they are our own."

"Well, that is the house the French esteem," answered the Algonquin. "Those are the sort of people on whom they fawn and in whom they take delight, because to become a Christian is to resign oneself to all those miseries, as well as to be no longer lucky in hunting, in fishing, in war, and in the other things that make life pleasant, for the black-gowns are opposed to all our charms, and the feasts and dances that have always brought health and luck to us."

"Thou hast no sense," interrupted Atondo, "for thou believest what thou wantest to believe. Be it known to thee that Aotiokwadoron and I went down to Quebec infidels, thinking as thou now thinkest, and came back Christians ;

and it was because we saw the sights that thou hast seen with different eyes that we were changed. The examples of the French and converted Algonquins, the zeal and charity of the white sisters who crossed the seas to help us, the love shown the converted by the French captains, and the virtue in the face of the great Onontio, all these were proofs to us that the truths believed in by so many great people ought to be believed in by us."

"That may be," answered the Algonquin, "if thou desirest to live up in the sky some day and thou hast legs to carry thee so distant a journey, it is well, but for my part I prefer to be sure of that only life I know about here below, that it may be long, that I may have plenty to eat, that women may come to me as often and as many as I may want, and that I may enjoy feasts and dancing and games and burning and eating Iroquois for many years. So let me say this to you, my brothers, that if today I saw the whole of your village become Christian I would be satisfied to be considered the greatest impostor in the world if I saw one of you remaining alive before the end of the third year."

"Thou thyself art half dead now," was the answer of Atondo, and indeed he spoke the truth, for the Algonquin, extremely ill-favoured by nature, and bearing the marks of endless dissipation, looked as though the grave was already open for him; and it was generally known that his children, his brothers and nephews, had died in the woods. But he went on:

"I foresaw long ago these misfortunes caused by the new faith. In vain did I predict them to those who, after refusing to believe me, acknowledged but too late, after their misfortune, that they had been deceived. Has any Christian escaped, as I have, from the clutches of a thousand deaths prepared for him? If their God in reality be the Almighty,

why does he leave them in adversity and opprobrium, why does he not break their chains? Why does he not show in this country where he wants to be acknowledged that it is truly good to have him for one's sovereign? But since those who refuse to worship him are happier than those who have become his subjects, if you, my brothers, like me, have any feeling and love for yourselves, for your children, and for your country, choose with me to consider him rather as an enemy than as a friend."

Discourses such as these produced a great effect on the minds of the Hurons and filled them with vague apprehensions. The weak lost heart, and even many catechumens decided to wait and see how others fared in the new order before taking the fateful step themselves. Others returned to the old superstitions and glorified the demons of the country in gorging feasts and lascivious dances and mating parties with even more abandon than before.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE IROQUOIS TERROR

IN the summer that followed the Huron merchant fleet, for reasons which Father Brebeuf well understood, did not go down on the circuitous journey to Quebec. The Iroquois, armed with arquebuses obtained from the New Netherlands, were showing unprecedented activity. An army of Senecas, the nearest of the Iroquois Five Nations to the Hurons, was reported half a league from Tenaustaye, and every Huron brave was required to defend his country. Meanwhile the Mohawks, having broken through the defences of Sieur de Montmagny, awaited Huron canoes along the St. Lawrence.

Recently the Iroquois had struck out of the blue at several frontier Huron towns and destroyed them. Apprehension had seized the Arendarrhonons so strongly that they had abandoned their part of the Huron country, as being too accessible to Iroquois attack, and had distributed themselves among the other nations of the Huron confederacy.

In the meantime a hundred Iroquois prisoners had been distributed among the Huron towns to be tortured, mutilated and burnt after ancient custom, with such added cruelty as a spirit of vengeance, stimulated by recent loss of relatives at Iroquois hands, might in each case dictate. One escaped by strangling himself, another by plunging headlong and drowning himself in a great boiling kettle.

Brebeuf and the other Fathers, hastening from one village to another, succeeded in instructing and baptizing every captive they reached.

In almost every case they had to force their way through howling mobs, giving vigorous battle to the judges, who uttered a thousand blasphemies, desiring for their prisoners a hell where they might burn eternally, and accusing the Fathers of stilling by promises of heaven the shrieks of agony that were music in their ears. Often the executioners used the heated irons against the Fathers, so that their lives were in danger.

At Ossossane there was one Iroquois prisoner, whose indomitable mien caused grave anxiety among the Hurons, for he showed a fortitude in the midst of his torments surpassing anything before seen. During the first two hours of the night, while glowing hatchets and burning brands were applied to every part of his body, he demeaned himself as though of marble, neither trembling nor flinching.

He never complained, never exclaimed, never cried out, never even sighed, or gave the least indication of suffering. His steadfast contempt threw his judges into fury and into fear, for in their eyes there was no worse augury of coming disaster than self-control in a victim.

They redoubled their efforts, but only succeeded in tiring themselves more than they tired the sufferer, who stood resolutely still, offering himself to his foes, conversing with them with perfect coolness, and occasionally breaking into song. When morning came the savages quickly put him to death, regarding the prolongation of his suffering as the increase of their confusion. For all their exertions had resulted without pleasure to the populace, whose greatest joy was in hearing the victims of their fury shriek and cry for mercy.

The sense of doom that successive perils had spread among the Hurons was augmented following the execution of this victim. Everywhere the fortitude of the tortured Iroquois

was taken as a presage of calamity to come. Meanwhile the temporary peace with their nearest neighbours among the five Iroquois nations had been broken, and fighting had broken out again along every forest trail.

Thus the terror of a destructive war followed on the famine and pestilence which in previous years had caused desolation from the northern shores of the Nation of the Bear to the frontier villages of the Nation of the Cord.

The forays of the Iroquois had continued to increase from year to year. They now struck everywhere in winter and spring and summer. No one felt safe from them in any quarter of the Huron country. Women and children disappeared in the flash of an eye from the cornfields in which they worked or were killed in the very sight of their own palisades.

Indeed it often happened that an Iroquois warrior, quite naked and with nothing but a hatchet in his hand, would cross two hundred leagues of wilderness from the sheer lust of blood and, penetrating alone at night into a Huron village, would kill as many as he could find sleeping in the cabins and successfully disappear with several hundred on his trail for days.

The Iroquois were the Ishmaels of the American wilderness, with their hands against every man. They were in declared or covert war with everyone of the surrounding nations, but with the Hurons and Algonquins first of all. They spread terror from the far western mountains to the Atlantic shore, for their ambition was the destruction of the male population and partial adoption of the women of every tribe in that wide area. The lust of blood would carry a small band of Iroquois warriors over hundreds of leagues. From their strongholds on the Mohawk they were striking simultaneously on the shores of the Arctic seas and the

Mississippi great waters on the way to the Vermilion Sea, where the Fathers had already striven to follow them.

They attacked with the ferocity of tigers and wolves, and disappeared as swiftly as birds. Treachery was their peculiar weapon. They struck with strength and boldness and were beyond the reach of their enemy's weapon before he had time to employ it.

The attack and killing and whisking away of victims never took more than a moment, if a moment was all that was required. A lone Iroquois would lie for a week without food behind a stump near a house in order to surprise the first person who came along and split his head.

They were the most incalculable of foes. When they were at home on the Mohawk the Hurons imagined they saw them at their doors ; and when they were reported to be on the Mohawk they flung themselves on their prey a hundred leagues away.

In former years they had fought in large armies in the summer. But now they had distributed themselves in a multitude of separate bands and struck everywhere at every season of the year. But the fear had grown that their most powerful armies were preparing to strike the Huron country.

The Iroquois had wiped out a number of frontier Huron towns, such as Contarea and Cahigue, called St. Jean Baptiste by the Jesuits, and then had lain low, lulling the apprehensions of the Hurons, who began to believe the enemy thirst for vengeance had at last been slaked.

Then in the following July, choosing their time with infinite cunning, they threw themselves on Tenaustaye, metropolis of the Nation of the Cord. Many of its warriors were trading down the Ottawa towards Quebec ; some were fishing and at the chase ; bands of braves were exploring for

the Iroquois, when suddenly they appeared from nowhere, seeking to make a holocaust of the capital and its people.

Sentinels in their watch towers had sung the livelong night with a volume of lung power that shook the woods and ought to have intimidated the enemy, but toward the dawn drowsiness had supervened and the voices had died away.

It was then that Iroquois warriors moving ghostly in the dark left the edge of the woods and crept squirrel-like to the summits of towers and trees. One after the other invisible hatchets cleft the skulls of the sentinels and sent their bodies below to be scalped without a moan or the rustling of a leaf. The Iroquois could not have moved more silently had they been compounded of spirit and air instead of bone and flesh.

Then in the rosy, ethereal dawn that withdrew the shadows on an Eden glorious with purling brooks, wild fruits and coloured blossoms, a thousand of these incarnate demons appeared from the depths of the woods and invested the partially slumbering town. With fierce yells that resembled the cries of fear and rage among the animals in a forest fire, they scaled the ramparts and poured within.

Tenaustaye, once the citadel of a scoffing infidelity, had become an important resident mission of the Jesuits, with a chapel of fashioned timber and a considerable Christian population, under the charge of Father Daniel, the earliest companion of Father Brebeuf among the Hurons. On that morning the small church was crowded to the doors with the rising of the sun, and Father Daniel had barely ended the first morning devotions when the war-whoop of the enemy and a general moan of terror filled the air.

In the church and without the cry at once arose among the warriors who remained : " To arms ! To arms ! Repel the

enemy." Some seized their weapons and rushed to meet the advancing foe; others took to headlong flight; terror, lamentation, confusion were everywhere. Father Daniel, without even removing his vestments, rushed at once to where the danger was greatest, haranguing both heathen and neophyte, and encouraging them to a brave defence.

"Fight to the end, my brothers," he cried. "There is still hope. Defend your cabins to the last; place yourselves as a rampart between the foe and your wives and children."

"Trust to us, Anwennen," cried Atondo, one of the earliest of the neophytes. "We shall die rather than submit."

"But they are many and we are few. It would be folly to fight in the face of defeat, and to be assuredly burnt and eaten, when we have hopes of escape."

This came from one Awenhokwi, the Huron emissary who had sought the death of Father Brebeuf among the Hurons. Father Daniel, who knew him as an inveterate infidel, turned towards him.

"Thou fearest death, Awenhokwi, because thy life of dissipation is dear to thee," said the Father, "and now at last thou hast faith in the fire to come. But to the believer death is nothing but a way to everlasting bliss. Seek thou a Christian heart before it is too late."

Indeed, troops of former scoffers now came forward and cried for mercy, asking for the cleansing waters that paradise might be opened to them, so that the Father, with the foe already in sight, was unable to cope with the numbers and used the method of aspersion.

Then the Father rushed from one point to another to seek a means of escape for the women and children who lagged behind; and from these he ran to the sick and the old people in the cabins. The cracking of muskets, with which the Iroquois were heavily supplied, could now be heard on

every hand. Then he hastened to the church, which he found full of members of his flock, bewildered, believing that in the temple of God succour might come to them, or unwilling or unable to escape. These he animated with words of fire ; and seeing the enemy everywhere victorious he told them that there was then but little hope left in this world.

“ My brothers, my sisters,” he said, “ today many of us will meet in paradise ; believe this, hope this, persevere to the end, that God may for ever love you.”

The church was somewhat removed from the rest of the town, and while the Iroquois remained busy in setting fire to the cabins in the centre it was seen that there was still an avenue of escape. This most of the congregation after an interval decided to take, strongly urging the Father to go with them, particularly as at that time the enemy had learnt of the rich plunder in the church and was hurrying with his customary discord of yells to seize it. But the Father still saw around him a crowd of old men, women and children, whom he now bade to flee in whatever direction escape was possible.

“ Flee, my brothers, flee, my sisters,” he cried, “ and bear with you your faith even to your last breath. As for me I must face death here as long as there is a soul left to be gained for heaven. Dying here to save you, my life is no longer anything to me ; we shall see one another again in heaven.”

Then when he found himself deserted and alone, and his congregation everywhere seeking cover or escape, in order that he might delay the enemy and like a good shepherd aid in the escape of his flock, the Father issued from the door of the church and went forward to meet the advancing Iroquois, who, astonished at seeing the tall figure, clothed in vestments of magnificence never before seen, first stopped

in astonishment, and then recoiled, as if he bore in his person the formidable strength of a military company.

This break on the onset of the foe greatly aided the fleeing congregation, for the Iroquois formed a circle around him and had to incite one another to strike before the Father at last fell under a shower of arrows and mortally pierced in the breast by an arquebus shot.

It was then that the savages rushed upon him and stripped him, subjecting his naked body to a thousand indignities in the fury of their rage at being deprived of the means of torturing him, and there was hardly one of them who did not add his wound to the corpse. Fire was meanwhile consuming the cabins, and the church, after being despoiled, was set on fire also. Into the roaring flames the body of the Father was then cast, and made so complete a holocaust that not even a bone was left. The church he had helped to build and where he had worked for eight years was thus made his funeral pyre, and with it the once populous town which he had laboured to make a Christian citadel.

That day and night in the silence of death along the woods around the stricken capital the Iroquois still prowled, seeking prey and finding it. For there distressed mothers, burdened with companies of children, whose innocent cries betrayed their hiding-place, provided delicate fare for Iroquois teeth. And here and there, in the dark, points of light on the edge of the woods told those who watched from afar that the victors had broken the edges of their hunger, and that if game was rare for the Hurons in the Huron land, the Iroquois did not find it so, and that it was tender and rich enough to come many leagues to savour.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE IROQUOIS AT ST. IGNACE

AS the Iroquois shadow deepened over the land of the Hurons, Brebeuf saw the docility, the innocence and the fervour of the people grow with it, so that the land became almost a transfigured land and the abode of the blessed. Catechumens, neophytes and full-fledged Christians had begun to form the larger population in every town, and infidelity was almost put out of sight. The old heathenism became transformed, and the squalor, the brutality and the canine obscenity of primeval savagery gave way to a grace and gentleness of manner and speech that would have done honour to a people steeped in civilization for a thousand years.

The Iroquois had by this time destroyed all the frontier towns of the Hurons. Following the wiping out of Tenaustaye, the most southerly and the most populous of the Huron towns, the people had fallen back and concentrated in what was formerly the heart of the country. Here Father Brebeuf, assisted by Father Gabriel Lalemant, who had arrived from Quebec in the preceding August, had charge of five neighbouring villages, of which the most important were St. Louis and St. Ignace, both strongly fortified.

There was a great deal of disquietude in the villages, for they had now become the frontier outposts of the country, and desolation had already rolled to the foot of their

palisades. It appeared too much to hope that it would not roll farther, but on that slender hope the people had perforce to build their plans for the future.

The most consoling consideration was that the Iroquois had their homes two hundred leagues away, and were now on bad terms with the Neutrals on the Niagara River, one of whose villages they had treacherously destroyed and through whose territory they had to pass to reach the Hurons. But the Iroquois were as crafty in diplomacy as in war, and there were vague rumours of large war bands hunting and wintering in the Attiwandaron forests and drawing steadily nearer.

But since rumours of imminent Iroquois inroads never ceased, no marked attention was paid to the latest. Nevertheless there was a considerable migration at the beginning of winter to St. Louis from St. Ignace, which was more than a league farther along the Iroquois line of approach.

In spite of all these considerations Father Brebeuf and Father Lalemant were both talking happily about the future when they set out from Sainte Marie one morning in the middle of March for their regular round of duties at St. Louis more than a league away. It was very early and the sun had not yet risen. There was a thick carpet of snow on the ground, and both moved easily over it on their snowshoes, Father Brebeuf much more skilfully than his less experienced companion, who floundered more than once off the narrow forest trail. They both laughed a great deal as Father Brebeuf helped to dig his companion out of a heap of snow into which at one unfortunate corner he went with his savage rackets in the air.

"Your reputation as a sorcerer would have been badly damaged had you done a trick like that a few years ago," laughed Father Brebeuf. "You had to show a lot of

skill in all you did to get an all-round reputation with the savages. The greater your skill the greater your reputation as an oki."

"Well, it was an uncomfortable reputation to have, as you ought to know. There ought to have been a rule that only those unskilful at running on the savage snow-shoes as well as bunglers at other things were to be sent to the Hurons. The rule might have worked well."

"In some ways it might," answered Brebeuf more seriously. "When I think of those days when we were all regarded as sorcerers and the authors of the plague and all the other evils that afflicted the country, I marvel at the transformation that has taken place. In those days iniquity exercised sovereign sway here and the demons were visibly at work on every hand. Today the land is a garden of the blessed. I would never have believed that I could see, even after fifty years of labour, a tenth part of the piety that I now see around everywhere. Who could have believed a few years ago that the Huron was capable of so much fervour and faith? The progress of the faith keeps increasing from day to day and the blessings of heaven are flowing down in abundance on these peoples."

The two Jesuits sped forward in silence for a while, both enjoying the crisp morning air which the rising sun had just begun to gild. It pleased them to see the snow rippling along the sides of their rackets, to feel the breath of nature everywhere around, and to hear the music of the birds in the bare trees overhead.

Brebeuf had now grown slightly older in appearance, and the ivory pallor had deepened, though he remained still as erect as a spear, and gave the same impression of athletic grace. His naturally dark hair had become sprinkled with grey, and around the piercing black eyes were new lines that

added a mellowing shadow to the original expression, that was always strong, always noble, and always benign.

"Have you heard the new rumour about the Iroquois?" asked Father Lalemant at length.

"I have heard some rumours," returned Brebeuf. "Have you heard anything that appears worthy of credence?"

"Well, when I was at St. Ignace yesterday they told me that Iroquois warriors had been seen in the adjacent forest at night reconnoitring the stockades of the village."

Brebeuf was silent awhile.

"That is not good news," he said at length. "If it is true, the enemy is meditating mischief."

"It was said further by some Attiwandarons recently arrived that an army of fully a thousand of the enemy, remarkably well furnished with weapons, was concealed in the woods and that the Iroquois were boasting that they were going to send every Huron to the land of souls."

"That is how they talk," said Brebeuf, "and there may be truth in it. They have a deadly hatred of the Hurons of long standing, and have repeatedly sworn that they would destroy the whole country. But they have been threatening the Algonquins and all surrounding nations in the same way. And they are really in the way of putting their threats into execution, for their ambition has been greatly enlarged by their possession of arquebuses which they have secured from the Dutch who trade with them along the river that descends from the mountains opposite Quebec to New Amsterdam and the great ocean."

"The Attiwandarons who passed through the forests before they arrived at St. Ignace declare that the Iroquois, now on the war-path, are in possession of fully three hundred arquebuses and great quantities of powder."

"If these reports are true the situation is serious; and if

the Iroquois succeed in destroying these neighbouring towns they will destroy the Huron nation and our nascent church, for these are all that are now left of them. I can hardly believe that such a calamity can happen and that all our work will thus be permitted to be destroyed. But the ways of God are adorable and belong to the jurisdiction of His divine providence."

The expression on the Father's face continued grave, and his eyes swept the concave of trees and the sky with the air of one looking into the future.

"However, this is only March," he then said, "and the snow is still on the ground. It is decidedly early for an Iroquois attack, for they prefer to wait till the summer time when the fleet and a large portion of the men are down towards Quebec. It was in the height of the summer last year that they attacked and destroyed Tenaustaye. However, so many of the men have now been killed that the enemy, puffed up with victory, may have become reckless. And then the snow has greatly smoothed the journey of two hundred leagues from their country. It is hard to decide what to expect, particularly in the case of an enemy so treacherous, so filled with the lust for blood, and possessed of motives and purposes and inclinations so inexplicable."

The Fathers had by this time reached the palisade of the village of St. Louis, which Brebeuf himself had helped the natives to build. The stockade was of pine trees, from fifteen to sixteen feet in height, with a deep ditch, for the most part nature's work, which made the village rather inaccessible to an enemy. The barred gate swung open when they touched it and was quite unguarded. Father Brebeuf commented on the aboriginal remissness.

"You can teach the savage many things, but you cannot teach him prudence," he said. "Several hundred Iroquois

could come through that gate just as easily as we have done. Let us hope that fortune will protect them if they will not take the trouble to protect themselves."

However, the entire village was not asleep. There were savages moving about in the open places, and the drowsy voices of squaws called to their day of heavy labour could be heard in some of the cabins. There were already a number of savages around the chapel when the Fathers opened it, and these were quickly joined by others.

The savages in winter slept round the log fires in the clothes they wore during the day, and came straight from the fires to the chapel, with their cloaks and skins wrapped round them. Soon blanketed forms moved silently across the snow from every point of the village, and the chapel, in the midst of which Father Lalemant had set a pine fire burning, was completely filled.

Shortly after, with singular foreboding and more than ordinary emotion, Father Brebeuf was listening to the liquid, untutored voices of neophytes, chanting a prayer for the Iroquois, their enemies, which he had taught the congregations in all the Huron towns :

" Pardon, O Lord, those who pursue us with undying hatred, who murder us without pity. Open their eyes to the truth, that they may know and love Thee, that they may be friends to Thee and us."

The Superior in crimson chasuble had celebrated mass and was engaged on the last decade of the rosary, repeated by the whole congregation in fluent Huron, when mingled voices, mournful, excited and breathless, were suddenly heard coming from a distant point in the village. Father Brebeuf stopped in the midst of an " Ave Maria " and listened, while a deep hush fell on the savage congregation also. The voices could now be quite distinctly heard.

" Ouai ! Ouai ! Ouai ! Ouai ! Ouai ! Ouai ! Ouai ! "

This was the sole message they carried, but the frenzied tones of grief carried a chill to every heart. There was no mistaking what the message meant.

" The Iroquois ! The Iroquois ! The Iroquois ! "

Brebeuf could hear the fatal name breaking on numerous lips behind him. Cries of terror a moment later arose from the women, while the men rushed for their arms and to the palisades. Some moments later the messengers burst into the chapel itself :

" Ouai ! Ouai ! Ouai ! Ouai ! Ouai ! "

This was the last expression of Huron anguish, and Brebeuf had heard it often enough before. He was standing at the altar facing the congregation, which now consisted almost wholly of women and children, who pressed around him with cries for protection on every side. On the edge of the crowd two messengers stood, almost entirely naked, breathless, and covered with blood and wounds.

" Echon," cried one to the Father over the heads of the women, " the Iroquois are burning St. Ignace, and some of them are on the way to St. Louis now. You have no time to lose."

Father Brebeuf had already divested himself of his chasuble and now stood simply in soutane, surplice and stole, with Father Lalemant looking at him for counsel.

" The day we have so long looked forward to has at last arrived, my Father," he said. " It looks as though the end has come. It is not improbable that before the day is ended we may be treated like unto our Master and made a spectacle to the angels and to men."

Then he turned to the shrieking women.

" My sisters," he said, " the only hope of yourselves and your children is flight, and at once. Take the forest trail to

Sainte Marie and beyond. The Iroquois may be on us any moment."

The two Fathers then took as many of the smaller children as they could carry in their arms and rushed them with all speed to an opening in the stockade, the squaws and maidens snatching up the children and running with them, crying in terror as they ran.

Many had already fled at the first alarm, and when the Fathers reached the narrow gate the path was filled with fugitives. Some of the mothers were greatly impeded by the number of their children, and the Fathers used their authority to induce women not so impeded to carry some child with them.

When they had got every woman and every child in sight on the road to some sort of escape, they came within the stockade again and made a round of the cabins. Here they found a number of sick, and old men, and some women who refused to leave their men. The Fathers consoled those who needed consolation and then went to the palisades to see how matters stood. They found there about a hundred well-armed warriors waiting for the enemy, who was not yet in sight.

From the top of the stockade flames that were consuming the village of St. Ignace could be seen a league away, the smoke billowing upwards and hanging as a heavy pall over the forest. The Fathers expected to see a train of fugitives on the trail that led to St. Louis, but outside of some sentinels watching for the advance guards of the Iroquois, there was not a soul in sight. The three ensanguined savages who brought the alarm to St. Louis were apparently the only ones to escape.

"How did the enemy get into the stockade so easily?" asked Father Brebeuf of one of the fugitives who stood near.

"The stockade of St. Ignace is quite strong. At the very least they ought to have been kept at bay for hours, giving the women and children time to escape."

"They came on us in the middle of the night when everybody was in a deep sleep," answered the savage in despairing tones.

"Did nobody hear them at the palisades?"

"Not a soul. They were in our cabins before we knew they were there. The first sounds we heard were the groans of those whose heads were being split. The second sound was the Iroquois war-whoop. We were all dull from sleep and the darkness and there was hardly any fight at all. Nevertheless I saw several Iroquois killed."

Standing by the two Fathers was Estienne Annaotaha, a warrior famous all over the country for his exploits, whom Father Brebeuf had instructed and baptized.

"Echon," he said to Father Brebeuf, "thou knowest the stockade at St. Ignace. It was strongly fortified on three sides, with one little space that was weaker than the others. It was there, it is clear, that the Iroquois made the breach, through which they stole into the town. After their custom they made themselves masters of the place before our warriors could put themselves on the defensive. Things will be different here, for small as our numbers are in comparison with theirs, we will be prepared when they arrive."

And then a look of anxiety came into the warrior's countenance.

"But thou, Echon, and thy brother Atironta here. Why are you both still here? We beg of you to leave this place to the warriors while there is still time. The Iroquois is no respecter of persons, and should the worst come to the worst you will die ten thousand deaths before you die once. The

black-robos do not carry arms, and are unable to defend themselves as we are able."

"No, Annaotaha," answered the Father. "Our place is here with you and here we must remain. If it please Heaven to ask the surrender of our lives, why our lives have been surrendered long ago. That is why we are here. We shall remain as long as there is a single soul that may require our help."

"The Iroquois are as bitterly incensed against the French as against us," declared Annaotaha. "Those who are not French but are from your world on the shores of the ocean have provided them with arquebuses, and they boast they will drive every Frenchman back to France. Since they killed Father Jogues they are eager to kill all the black-robos. We have reared ourselves to die by the fire from our youth up, but if the enemy is successful here, I fear for thee and thy brother."

"Think not of us, Annaotaha, my brother," answered Brebeuf, laying his hand affectionately on the warrior's shoulder, "we are prepared for whatever the inscrutable providence of heaven will permit, in the way of torture or death. We have prayed for it from the beginning, if it would advance the conversion of the people to whom we have dedicated our lives and our all. We too are soldiers, even though we do not carry arms."

CHAPTER XXX

ARROW AND ARQUEBUS

AS the Father spoke an excited din arose both within and without the stockade, and the Huron warriors pointed their tomahawks in the direction of an object under the roof at one end of the war cabin, the bark end walls of which were the highest in St. Louis.

Brebeuf looked up and saw the feathered shaft of a long Iroquois arrow still quivering where it had struck. The din continued outside the stockade, and all could now behold on an elevation opposite the direction in which the enemy had been expected to come the figure of a tall Iroquois warrior, naked except for his breech-clout, but covered with ornaments.

On his head was a turban of what looked like bear-skin dyed a vivid scarlet. There was a heavy collar of porcelain around his neck and numerous bracelets of porcelain on each arm. His body was almost black against the sky. He held a giant bow aloft with his left hand and made sweeping gestures with a powerful right arm.

He was walking to and fro after the manner of the professional Iroquois orator, presenting first one side of his body to the Hurons and then the other, manifestly inviting the Hurons to come forward and meet him. Some of the Hurons outside the stockade had already started towards the Iroquois, but had turned back again. It occurred to them

that the action of the Iroquois was less bravado than a stratagem. There could be very little doubt that a war band of Iroquois lay concealed behind the hillock.

As the Hurons watched, a fusillade of arquebuses sounded and the bullets were heard striking against the palisade. Iroquois warriors, their swarthy countenances upraised in eagerness, their ornaments and weapons gleaming, and the ridges of feather plumes and fescue bristling like the tufted ears of a lynx, could now be seen advancing along the forest trails, and their fierce war-whoops broke out in great volume as they came in full sight of the village.

The Huron sentinels now fell back within the stockade, for the number of the Iroquois was evidently greatly superior to theirs. In a few moments the arrows fell thick and fast into the village and the spattering of arquebus balls became continuous. The detonation of the arquebuses had a disintegrating effect on the Hurons. This was a form of war with which they were still unfamiliar, while the Iroquois handled their muskets as skilfully as any European.

As the fusillade continued the warriors crowded round the two Fathers.

"Echon," said Annaotaha, "thou knowest my brother, Tisiko, whom I have so long sought to induce to leave the infidels and become one of our baptized. I pray thee that thou wilt pour the cleansing waters over him that he may escape those terrible flames of hell and we may be together in heaven."

Father Brebeuf knew Tisiko well and had repeatedly talked to him. He had long desired to follow his brother and to be numbered among the Christian neophytes, but could never be induced to give up his way of living and his habit of going from one woman to another, according to old custom. That had been the stumbling block. He now

promised a complete amendment if he lived, and since death menaced them all, Brebeuf gave him his desire.

From that moment the two Fathers were everywhere, for the fight had begun to get quite hot. Father Brebeuf particularly paid attention to the breach, baptizing all the catechumens and invigorating them with the promise of heaven. Father Lalemant at another point was giving absolution to the neophytes.

Hundreds of Iroquois were now in view around the village, aiming their arquebuses and sending their showers of arrows at the Hurons on the platform along the top of the palisade. Several of the Iroquois warriors had taken positions on the branches of neighbouring lofty trees, and from these points sought out whatever figure they saw in the centre of the village.

Meanwhile the more daring of them, with a fierce war-whoop, advanced to the attack. A determined attempt was made by a band of at least a hundred to rush the palisade and mount it. But the Hurons poured down on the attackers a hail of arrows, stones and boiling water, and during two assaults of that character killed over thirty of the storming party. Meanwhile the Iroquois began sending flaming arrows into the bark walls of the cabins in the effort to start a conflagration. Two or three warriors were detailed to watch for fires so started and to put them out.

A strong Iroquois war party kept repeatedly storming the barred gate of St. Louis, and here the fight was hottest. At this point tomahawks and spears came into play and blood flowed freely. Here Annaotaha and his brother were conspicuous in the defence, and both fought like lions, though repeatedly wounded.

Brebeuf as he passed this point had his biretta pierced by an arrow which carried it a distance of twenty feet behind

him. Both he and Father Lalemant had meanwhile gone through every cabin, looking for the sick who might desire their help and forcing the women and the children who were left to seek escape before it was too late.

Already five hundred people had either gone to Sainte Marie or had taken refuge in the depths of the woods. But there were a great many women and children and sick who were not able to get away.

When the Fathers got back to the stockade, they found many dead and wounded and things in a desperate condition. The Iroquois, scenting a quick victory, were now everywhere and their war-whoops became continuous. They had begun to attack the palisade of stalwart pine trees with their hatchets at various points, and it became clear that it would only be a matter of minutes before they had made passages for themselves through considerable breaches.

At this point, Oronton, one of the defenders at the breach, called to Annaotaha, and advised that all should do their best to escape.

"They are too strong for us. We will be in their hands in a very short time if we do not take flight now. Come, let us go together."

But Annaotaha pointed to Father Brebeuf and Father Lalemant, who had now joined them.

"What, Oronton," he said, "take flight and leave these two good Fathers who have stayed with us to the end? These two could easily have gone away with the others, and they have remained here and exposed their lives for our sake. The love they have for us will be the cause of their death, for there is no longer time for them to flee across the snows. Let us die with them and we shall go in company to heaven."

The deafening chorus of war-whoops from the Iroquois, resembling the yelping of hounds in at the kill, now made it clear that they were within the village; and indeed part of the palisade had toppled with a crash and through the breach thus made they were pouring to the number of several hundred. The shrieks of squaws and children began to be heard from some of the cabins, accompanied every now and then with the prolonged wail that signalled the removing of a bleeding scalp.

The Huron warriors had by this time scattered and the two Fathers were left standing almost alone. Flames broke out in many parts of the village and at some distance Brebeuf could descry Iroquois running around with flaming torches of rolled bark which they applied to the walls of the cabins.

A group of women and children now ran out of a near-by cabin in the direction of the Fathers, who went forward to meet them. All were in the last extremity of terror and shrieked in frenzied tones. When they reached the Fathers the women and children clung round them, clasping them by the knees. At the same time a band of fifty Iroquois sped forward, brandishing their tomahawks and throwing themselves on the group of Hurons around Annaotaha, who had now ceased fighting, bearing them to the ground and binding them with withes and thongs of twine made from hemp. Then the Iroquois caught sight of the black-robcs and came forward, bringing their prisoners with them.

Brebeuf stood erect and still as a statue, with Father Lalemant at his side, and the women and children still clutching the knees of both. Both priests were in their black soutanes with their stoles around their necks. Father Brebeuf carried his breviary in his left hand, while his right clasped the arm of a little boy, who had his face pressed in fright

against him. There was deep repose on the faces of both priests as they watched the approaching enemy.

The Iroquois on the other hand had ceased their war-whoops and the unexplained silence had brought to the same spot others of the war bands. Within a few minutes the two Fathers found themselves the centre of a circle of nearly a hundred naked Iroquois, the faces of every one of them symbolically smeared with the blood of their victims. They made no immediate attack on the Fathers, but circled slowly around them or merely leaned on their bows and arquebuses at a discreet distance and gazed.

Brebeuf saw nothing friendly in the concentrated staring of those wild-looking men. There was apprehension in the circle of glittering black eyes, such as might appear in the eyes of a herd of mountain lions in the presence of an object strange to the jungle. There was an exploring curiosity that searched the Fathers from the soles of their shoes to the angular birettas which both had now assumed. There was a terrible malignancy in every lineament of those mask-like countenances in which the bold tattooing commingled with the red blood and black and green paint to produce an effect altogether inhuman.

Brebeuf surrendered the last vestige of hope as he looked at the bristling feathered hair, fierce as the ridge on the back of a jackal, the blood-bespattered arms and chests, and the still fresh scalps at their girdles dripping blood on their thighs and knees and on the earth around them.

The circle grew continuously closer, and the Iroquois were now talking among themselves. Father Brebeuf saw that it was himself who was getting the major share of attention and once or twice he heard the name "Echon."

He had no doubt that it was his reputation as the most powerful of the sorcerers which had halted the Iroquois in

their tracks and which now led them to explore carefully before they struck. Doubtless also most of the warriors before him had never before seen a black-robe and sought to gaze their fill before beginning their bloody work.

He knew very well that the present pause was but akin to the moment of brooding ecstasy, which the tiger permitted itself, once it had its teeth in its prey and before it tore it limb from limb and devoured it.

And indeed the spell was quickly broken, but in a manner which Brebeuf himself would never have anticipated.

One of the women who knelt at the feet of the Father with her little son was one of the earliest of his catechumens, to whom he had given the name of Agatha. The excess of her terror had completely overcome her and she now began wailing in a heart-broken manner. This annoyed the Iroquois chieftain who stood directly in front of Brebeuf, a tall warrior, with his skin baked by pine fires and beweathered till it had become almost black, and wearing at his girdle a pouch that consisted of a perfect human arm, with thumb and fingers as if in life.

This fierce man now suddenly stretched forward his left hand and seized the woman by the hair, while he touched with the edge of his hatchet the middle of her skull with the intention of making a clean split.

He had the hatchet already poised in the air, when an arm more powerful than his own suddenly shot out and grasped him by the wrist; and the Iroquois who stood around were amazed to see the leader of their war party bent slowly backwards until his head almost touched the earth as though he were a piece of heated iron, and the hatchet torn out of his hand and sent hurtling against the wall of a near-by cabin by the tall black-robe who stood over him.

This surprising display of strength by Brebeuf, which only an outrage against the weak could have called forth, stunned the Iroquois, but broke the enchantment that held them. The entire circle now sprang forward with a medley of wild yells and bore both Fathers to the ground. Both were partly stripped and bound with strong hemp and placed with Annaotaha and the other prisoners amid wild excitement on the part of the Iroquois.

The victorious enemy now prepared to carry their spoils and their prisoners back to St. Ignace, where a strong garrison had been left to sustain them in case of retreat. Everything that was valuable and portable they now loaded on their prisoners, both men and women, until like pack mules they bent under the load.

The two Fathers and one or two of the higher Huron chieftains they left unburdened, and with their arms securely tied, for a fate as terrible as their rank was high would later be prepared to tax their strength.

On Brebeuf, as the most considerable prisoner whom they had ever captured, they placed a heavy crown of porcelain beads and a yellow bearskin cloak. It was part of the savage ritual of torture that a prisoner of rank should first be seen with the externals of his office and worth before being subjected to the deepest and uttermost humiliation.

A terrible scene preceded the general departure. Almost every cabin in the village was now a flaming furnace, and old men, women and children were running round distractedly.

Among these the Iroquois moved like imps of hell against the back-drop of the flames, making prisoners, reserving for torture and the kettle those who were strong and well, and casting into the flames the children and the sick and such

of the wounded men and women as were too incapacitated to follow them into captivity.

When desolation reigned where formerly had stood one of the principal towns of the Hurons the victors, dancing wildly and singing glad war songs from the depths of their chests, started back for ruined St. Ignace along the way they had come.

CHAPTER XXXI

ECHON AND THE LAST SCENES

NEWS had already gone ahead to the Iroquois garrison at St. Ignace of the destruction of St. Louis and the capture of Echon, pale-face chief of chiefs in the councils of the Hurons, commander of the black-robcs and great captain of all the sorcerers, with numerous other prisoners and quantities of booty. It was known therefore that a great reception was being prepared for them, and that fact was continuously impressed on the prisoners by their captors.

"Thou, Echon, and thy brother will receive great honour when thou arrivest in St. Ignace," said one of his captors to Father Brebeuf. "A fire will be prepared for thee which will greatly relieve thee of the winter cold. Thou shalt have also many presents, having regard to thy worth, with heavy and precious collars to hang round thy neck. Thou shalt also be baptized many times so that thou wilt be happy in heaven."

To this Father Brebeuf made no reply. He had recognized in the speaker one Chiouena, a renegade Huron catechumen who had gone over to the Iroquois, and who had not been surpassed by any of the enemy in the number of atrocities committed against his kindred.

When they came in sight of St. Ignace the Iroquois called a halt. They then stripped the prisoners and two of the Iroquois donned the cassocks and birettas of the Fathers and strutted by their side. The prisoners then received their first "caressing." The Iroquois applied wolfish teeth to the

fingers of each and tore out some of the nails of each hand. They were then driven forward to the welcome prepared for them.

Outside the stockade of St. Ignace a double line of warriors waited, who greeted the advancing procession with songs and vociferous shouting. Every warrior carried in his right hand some sort of weapon, a stick, the branch of a tree, the handle of a spear, or a stone hatchet.

As the prisoners walked or ran between the rows of their welcomers each received on his or her shoulders, loins, legs, breasts, abdomen and head a hailstorm of blows which sent the prisoners backwards when they wanted to go forward and forward when they sought to go backward.

This preliminary belabouring would appear to have been sufficient for the death of many. But the Iroquois were skilled in the prolongation of torture. They never struck a vital part till the proper time came, aiming to inflict the sum of affliction before the living spark was extinguished in their victims.

Once within the palisade of the still smouldering village Brebeuf and the rest of the prisoners were hurried forward to the central open space, where a great number of stakes, already bloodstained and charred, had been fastened in the ground. Around them and beyond lay the victims of the carnage of the previous night.

Father Brebeuf was the first to be bound, and though overwhelmed by the burden of the blows which he and the others had just received, seeing himself surrounded by neophytes whom he had instructed, he sought in that last hour to console them.

"My children," he said, "let us lift our eyes to heaven now when we are at the height of our afflictions. Let us remember to the last that God is the witness of our sufferings

and will soon be our exceeding great reward. Let us die in the faith ; and let us hope from His goodness the fulfilment of His promises."

Then looking from one to the other in deep compassion he added :

" I have more pity for you than for myself ; but sustain with courage the few remaining torments. These torments will end with our lives, but the glory which will follow them will never have an end."

The prisoners, bruised and borne down with the weight of their sufferings, wept as he spoke to them, though the men quickly regained their composure. The women continued to cry bitterly, and in the midst of their tears Annaotaha, the warrior, replied to the Father.

" Echon," he said, " we believe in these last hours what thou hast taught us and that is our consolation. Our spirits will be in heaven when our bodies will be suffering on the earth. Do thou pray to God for us that He may show us mercy. We will invoke Him until death."

There was murmuring among the Iroquois as these words were spoken, and two of the renegade Hurons came forward.

" How now," one of them said to Annaotaha, " thinkest thou that thou art master here ? "

" Ask thy God to help them now," he added as he applied a burning brand to the loins of the Huron warrior so that he cried out in agony.

But this was merely a preliminary. A lighter diversion was to open the tragic business. The Huron warriors were now commanded to sing and the Huron women to dance. For this purpose the women were brought forward entirely naked and exposed to the jeers and howls of the mob.

They were then made to dance to the songs of their own countrymen, who vied with each other in the roundness and

strength of their voices, for it was considered a mark of cowardice not to be able to sing during torture, and the courage of a warrior was measured by the loudness of his voice during that ordeal. The Iroquois, crowding near, struck and slapped the dancing women as they passed.

When this orgy had ceased the voice of Father Brebeuf could be heard again exhorting those of whom he had been the pastor to persevere to the end and to ask forgiveness for any offence which their persecutors might compel them to commit. This enraged the renegade Hurons and the Iroquois again, and they began to crowd round the Father, piercing his arms and legs with sharp awls and iron points. Then the Iroquois captain whom Brebeuf had worsted so signally at St. Louis came forward in front of the Father with a lighted brand.

"Echon," he said to him, "it is now thy turn. Let us hear how the French sing that the Huron women may dance to thy voice," and he applied the burning brand to the flesh of the Father so that all could hear the hissing and see the steam that arose above him.

But the Father stood immovable and maintained a profound silence, the warriors, both Iroquois and Huron, watching him with great astonishment.

The interest aroused by the steadfastness of Father Brebeuf gave a respite to the other prisoners, and the Iroquois began to concentrate their fury on him. They held under his armpits and against his loins hatchets made red-hot in the fire, and they put a necklace of red-hot hatchet heads around his neck in such a way that every motion of his body brought him a new torture.

For when he attempted to lean forward the hatchet heads that hung behind him burned his shoulders everywhere, and when he sought to lessen the agony by bending back

his chest and stomach endured a similar torture. When he stood erect, without leaning to one side or the other, the glowing hatchets were a double torture to him.

In the midst of these torments Father Brebeuf suffered like a rock, to all appearance insensible to the fire and the flames, uttering no cry, though occasionally moving his lips in prayer. Occasionally he closed his eyes and held his head back, as though he was experiencing some transport of the soul, which took him away to another scene.

At one point he addressed his torturers in a strong voice, in which there was no trace of resentment.

"My brothers," he said, "I forgive you freely for the excessive cruelty which you are inflicting on me and my brother and on those of whom we have been the pastors. And I pray God that He may open your hearts in His good time and make known to you the enormity you are committing. My brother and I have come to this country for no evil purpose and to practise no sorcery, as many of you believe. We have had but one thought in regard both to you and the Hurons, namely your everlasting happiness in heaven. I and my brother here will suffer these tortures very gladly, if we think that by paying this price the road to everlasting peace may be opened to you."

"The French are our enemies and not our friends," replied one of the Iroquois warriors. "They have always allied themselves with our enemies."

"They have not done so willingly, but because you obliged them to do so," answered Brebeuf. "They have always desired an alliance with you, as with the Hurons, and it has been their aim that all the nations here should live as friends and in peace. For ourselves we have not sought your furs, your lands or your other possessions, but only to do good to you, desiring your happiness even more than our own."

"Hast thou no horror of the fire?" the savage then asked.

"I fear the fire when I contemplate my own weakness," answered the Father, "for the sting of a fly is able to vex my patience. But I have asked God to assist me, and, aided by His grace, I no more fear the terrible torments of your flame than the pricking of a pin."

Then he turned to Father Lalemant, who was bound near him, and who, though grievously molested, had still to suffer the major torments.

"My Father," he said, "we are being made a spectacle before heaven and before the angels and before men."

Then he addressed the Huron prisoners.

"My children," he said, "keep up your hearts and remain faithful to the end, which will now not be long delayed. Before tomorrow's sun we will meet in heaven to receive an everlasting reward."

"We have heard enough of thy heaven, thy oki, and thy God," at this point yelled one of the renegade Hurons, who could understand the speech of the Father better than the Iroquois. This man then seized Brebeuf and girdled his mouth with a sharp knife, cutting off his nose and tearing away his lips.

Then in derision of the baptism which they had seen the Father administering to many in the breach at St. Louis during the height of the fighting, the Iroquois and the renegade Hurons bethought themselves of baptizing him with boiling water. They therefore brought forward some steaming kettles and poured them one after the other on his head, accompanying their acts with biting gibes.

"We baptize thee," said these men to Father Brebeuf, as the scalding water raised great blisters on his flesh, "to the end that thou mayest be blessed in heaven, for without proper baptism one cannot be saved."

And the renegade Hurons added with great mocking :
“ We treat thee as a friend, as thou plainly seest, since we will be the cause of thy greatest happiness in heaven. Thou shouldst surely thank us for so many good offices, for the more thou sufferest the more thy God will reward thee, as thou thyself hast taught.”

However the more the torments were augmented, the more the Father entreated heaven that the crimes committed by his persecutors should not be the cause of the reprobation of men whom he pardoned with all his heart. At one point he bent and kissed the stake to which he was bound, as the object of his desire and his love, and the final pledge of his salvation. The act was regarded as a sorcerer's rite by the Iroquois, and they redoubled the fury of the torment.

The torture of Father Brebeuf continued till three o'clock in the afternoon of the day of capture. While he was still full of life his torturers removed slices of flesh from his thighs, his calves, his legs and his arms, and these they broiled and ate before his sight.

They talked and giped at him with morsels of his half-cooked flesh between their teeth. They slashed all the fleshy parts of his body and thrust red-hot irons into the wounds even to the bone. They scalped him in the midst of his torments and fractured his jaw with the blow of a hatchet. They poured burning ashes over his scalped head and fastened a flaming cincture of bark around him under his armpits. They cut off his feet and also one of his hands.

Roused to fury by Brebeuf's exhortations to his fellow-sufferers, they broiled the tongue of the Father, repeatedly thrusting into his mouth flaming brands and burning pieces of bark ; and before he died they made an opening in his breast and tore out his heart, inhumanly feasting on it and

drinking his blood while it was still warm, that a courage so unparalleled might be transferred to their own veins.

Father Brebeuf died in the middle of the afternoon of that day. Father Lalemant's martyrdom was later and more prolonged, for it endured till after sunrise on the following morning, when death at last brought release. Most of the Huron prisoners were put to death after enduring the usual torments that went to ordinary prisoners. The rest, after numerous ordeals, were reserved to serve as slaves to their conquerors.

The Iroquois the next day reconnoitred the houses of Sainte Marie, where forty well-armed Frenchmen, outside the Fathers, awaited them ; then unaccountably sank into the woods again, driving their captives before them. As for the prisoners at St. Ignace doomed to die on the spot, these, men, women and children, they attached to stakes fastened to the earth floors of cabins still unconsumed ; and these cabins, before their departure, they set on fire, taking satisfaction in the agonized shrieks of victims held irremovably in the roaring furnace of flames, where children broiled by the side of their mothers, and young wives by the side of their husbands.

The next morning Father Rageneau with seven armed Frenchmen went from Sainte Marie to seek the bodies of the martyred priests. At St. Louis and St. Ignace they encountered spectacles of horror and beheld amid the ashes of both towns the half-consumed bodies of the catechumens who had perished in the flames.

They found the remains of both Fathers, the one a little apart from the other. They bore the sacred, mutilated bodies with loving hands to Sainte Marie and laid them uncovered on sheets of bark. They viewed with streaming eyes and touched with tender fingers all the wounds in the bodies

of both, which they found in consonance with what savage witnesses had already told them, and they buried the precious remains, wrapped in silk, till the bones could be carried to Quebec to become a venerated treasure for ever.

The death of Father Brebeuf marked also the dissolution of the Huron mission and the destruction of the Huron nation. The Iroquois had destroyed half the number of the Huron towns; the other half the Hurons themselves burnt and abandoned in terror.

With sorrowful hearts the Fathers went with them, committing to the flames Sainte Marie, the gardens of which during the years of terror had provided sustenance for thousands of fugitives every day, and leaving what had become to them a land of promise and a demi-paradise, a home of innocent delights, where death would have been a thousand times more sweet than life in any place elsewhere.

Thenceforth they shepherded the remnants of the Huron dispersal from isle to isle across the fresh water seas, resigning themselves to the prolongation of calamities, overwhelming and for ever adorable, but comprehensible only to the Heaven that sent them. And always before their eyes athwart the heavens there hung the cross which Brebeuf saw in vision, great enough for the crucifixion of nations and of all who ministered to them.

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